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## THE BANYANKOLE



The Mugabe or king

# THE BANYANKOLE

THE SECOND PART OF THE REPORT OF  
THE MACKIE ETHNOLOGICAL EXPEDITION  
TO CENTRAL AFRICA

BY

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CAMBRIDGE  
AT THE UNIVERSITY PRESS

1923

PRINTED IN GREAT BRITAIN

## PREFACE

I HAVE thought it wise to have the notes on this tribe bound as a separate volume, both that the report might be more easily handled, and because the tribe differs considerably from the people of the foregoing report on the Bakitara and calls for special study and consideration.

I have found it advisable in this case to retain the native title of *Mugabe* for the king in deference to the wishes of the officers at work in the country, who dislike the title of king being used for rulers of small African States. I have also used *Nganzu* for the chief minister, and *Bakungu* (sing. *Mukungu*) for chiefs of districts, but on the whole I have followed my usual rule of avoiding the use of native terms requiring constant reference to a vocabulary. I have accepted the local usage in calling the pastoral people *Bahuma* (sing. *Muhuma*) instead of *Bahima*, the Luganda form which I formerly accepted.

Here in Ankole, as in Bunyoro, the information has been obtained at first-hand from men who did not know any English. Though the tribe is older than the Bakitara and milk customs are more strictly followed than in other pastoral tribes, yet their ritual is not so definitely marked as might be expected.

I was unfortunate in arriving in the district when rinderpest was killing the cattle rapidly. This had caused the break-up of many homes, much hardship, and even starvation; I was indeed informed that in one or two cases whole families had committed suicide rather than live upon vegetable diet. Many of the clans and families had wandered far, seeking sustenance, but it was still possible to find a few herds in the country which were untouched by plague.

The tribe is of purer *Bahuma* blood than most pastoral tribes of this region, and even at the present time its members



refrain from intermarriage with the serfs who live amongst them and with any tribes who indulge in vegetable food.

The question of the Mugabe's (king's) descent baffled me. It is still an unsettled question whether he was the son of the preceding king or of the king's sister. I am inclined to think that if there has been a change from descent through the female line to descent through the male, it is of recent date, and that formerly the son of a king's sister and not the king's own son succeeded him on the throne.

I am indebted to the same kind helpers as in the work on the Bakitara. Miss Bisset, whose invaluable and indefatigable assistance has enabled me to get on so rapidly; Sir James G. Frazer who has kindly continued to read over my proofs; and my old friend the Rev. W. A. Cox, who had read through the manuscripts before his sudden and greatly regretted death. The loss to the remainder of this work is great, for he was ever ready to examine the manuscripts and his suggestions as to alterations and improvements were of much value.

J. ROSCOE.

OVINGTON, NORFOLK.

*March, 1923*

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## CHAPTER I

### ANKOLE, THE COUNTRY AND THE PEOPLE

The Banyankole early invaders of the Lake Region—nomadic life—present constitution of Ankole—the land—the cattle—appearance of the country—the salt district—wild animals—the clans—totemic system—the three great clans and their totems—sub-divisions of the main clans

ONE of the most healthy and interesting portions of the Uganda Protectorate is the district of Ankole. In area it is small, containing, according to the Government returns of 1919, 6131 square miles, while, according to the same returns, the population, including traders and settlers, numbers 149,469. Until recently the people of this region were comparatively unknown, though they were one of the earliest of those tribes who invaded the Lake Region and subdued the small and isolated village communities of negroes who were the original inhabitants of the land. They were of the same stock as the Baganda and the Bakitara or Banyoro, but these tribes and even the pastoral people of Ruanda admit that the Banyankole had settled in the country long before they came there. Evidently their nomadic habits, combined with their complete disregard of everything unconnected with cattle, prevented their making much impression either on the surrounding countries as warriors or on their own country as reformers.

The country in which they settled was well suited for cattle-rearing, and the good climate, excellent pasturage, and plentiful water made it possible for them to continue the nomadic life led by pastoral people, few of whom had any settled dwelling places. Even the Mugabe, by which title the native ruler is now known, had originally only a roughly built bee-hive hut, with a stockade round it forming an enclosure in which cows were kept by night; the ground was always slimy with the animals' droppings, but this and the smell of



the cows were considered wholesome and pleasant. There was no court-house, for the Mugabe's councils were held under the shade of some large tree, his main interest in life was guarding and improving the condition of his large herds; and his food was milk, which he drank in great quantities, and beer, which he drank, often to excess, at night.

Ankole, as at present constituted, is much bigger than when it was an independent state, for the British Government has added to it Mpororo, Egara, Bweszu and Busongora, small states which were originally separate kingdoms, entirely distinct and even antagonistic. The Mugabe of Ankole is now, under the British Government, ruler of all five states.

In their early times, before outside influence had altered their outlook, the pastoral people set no value on the land except for grazing purposes, and the agricultural people, who cultivated small portions of it, were despised and regarded as serfs. They could cultivate any land wherever they wished, but they were expected to do any menial work required by the pastoral people of the district in which they settled and to supply them with grain and vegetable food, should they require it. The pastoral people divided the land up into districts, but these divisions were merely for the purpose of settling questions which might arise either between agricultural people concerning the boundaries of their plots, or between herdsmen concerning the use and possession of watering-places, or between herdsmen and agricultural people, should the herdsmen allow their cattle to wander over the fields and destroy the crops. Beyond these cultivated plots, the country was free to herdsmen, who might pasture their cattle in any district they pleased.

A man was considered poor or wealthy according to the number of his cattle, and the places of the chiefs when assembled before the Mugabe were arranged according to the size of their herds. All the cattle were regarded as belonging to the Mugabe, and, though the people to whom he granted them were at liberty to do as they liked with them within the country, they might not sell or give them to anyone outside

the tribe without the special permission of the ruler. Few men would think of killing a cow, so that the only rules necessary were for the protection of bull-calves, which the herdsmen, if they felt a desire for meat, would find some pretext to kill. The chiefs had to keep careful watch lest this liberty should be carried too far, and the Mugabe issued regulations that only a certain number should be killed.

The country is hilly, but there are large tracts of rolling plain covered with fine grass, well suited for cattle-breeding, and there are fewer swamps than in Buganda. This fact makes the country more healthy for Europeans than many parts of Uganda, but the distance from means of communication either by water or by railways still keeps the settler away. The land, too, does not seem to be very suitable for the cultivation of cotton and coffee, and even plantains, which have during recent years been planted in large groves, are not so productive as in other parts. The general height above sea-level is much the same as in Buganda, some four thousand five hundred feet, while the hills rise to eight or nine thousand feet. Some of the valleys are wooded and even the lower hills are clothed with useful trees. The scenery of the valleys is often enriched by the presence of beautiful lakes, while a few of the hills are extinct volcanoes whose craters are often of striking beauty, for in their depths, several hundred feet down, there lie lakes of clear water, and the steep sides sloping to them are clothed with plants and flowers of tropical luxuriance and colour. The mountainous part of the country near Lake Edward has a grandeur hardly surpassed by any of the scenery through which the expedition passed.

Towards the lake there is a sharp fall in height of fully a thousand feet, and the plain on the lake shore is extremely hot, for the valley in which lie Lakes Edward and George is almost entirely enclosed by mountains. It is in this valley, though on the Toro side of it, that the salt used in Ankole is found, and the presence of hot springs makes the atmosphere damp and the heat very trying. People entering these plains from higher and more open parts almost invariably

suffer from severe attacks of a kind of low fever, which they often attribute entirely to the unwholesome atmosphere, overlooking the fact that the place is infested with mosquitoes and that anopheles abound. The water to be found in the pools in this district is brackish and one large sheet, some two or more miles long and nearly a mile wide, was found to be quite unfit for drinking or cooking purposes.

There is abundance of game of all kinds, but, as in most parts of the Lake Region, the animals move about the country according to the season. During the rains, when grass is tender and water fairly plentiful, game is found in large numbers inland at remote distances from the lakes, while in the dry season the animals make their way back to these certain watering-places. This causes a certain amount of migration among the carnivorous animals also, but, as there are always wild pigs and antelope to be found, only a limited number of carnivora wander away. In the districts round the lakes lions are sometimes troublesome even to the extent of carrying off people by day, but, as a rule, the cow-people do not fear them and seldom use any weapon other than a stick to drive them from their cows. If, however, a lion becomes dangerous and persists in carrying off human beings or animals, the men gather together and organise a hunt to kill it. Leopards are more feared by the cow-people because they are more stealthy and cunning in their methods of attack, springing out from hiding-places upon the cattle and even entering huts by night and dragging people out of them. Lions, on the other hand, usually attack more openly.

#### CLANS AND TOTEMS

The tribe of the Banyankole was totemic and one of the chief uses made of the totems was in defining relationships for the purpose of regulating marriage.

Clan exogamy was practised, but within the great clans intermarriage between the sub-divisions bearing the same primary totem was permitted if they had second or even

third totems which differed from each other. Within the clans the totemic system was of social value, for a man might always claim the help and support of others who had the same totem as himself; they might be called upon to help in sickness, to bury the dead, to give aid to any member of the clan who had fallen into debt, and, in the case of murder, it was the duty of every member of the dead man's clan to do his part in hunting down the murderer and avenging the death.

The tribe was divided into three main clans, each of which had many sub-divisions. These had, as a rule, the same primary and at times the same second totem as the principal clan, but intermarriage was only permitted if they had one distinctive totem. In some cases the totems differed entirely from those of the clan with which the division claimed relationship. The second totem was not generally regarded as of the same importance as the primary totem, but, when questions of relationship arose between clans with the same primary totem, the second or even the third totem would be named.

The three main clans were.

1. *Abahinda*. This was the royal clan and the totems were *nkima*, a small black-faced monkey, and *bulo*, the small millet, unhusked and uncooked. It was to this clan that the princes belonged and from it the rulers came. In Karagwe, as in Ankole, princes were *Bahinda*, in Mpororo and Ruanda they were *Basambo*, while in Bunyoro, Toro, Koki and Kiziba, they were *Babito*. The members of the Abahinda clan were not allowed to work magic or to make medicines. The second totem was the unhusked raw grain only, when husked and cooked it might be eaten. It was said that one chief when hungry had, as was then the habit of the agricultural people, taken raw grain in the ear and eaten some of it, which was breaking a custom, for he should not have eaten vegetable food but have waited until he could obtain milk. Later, his wife drew his attention to a husk which had clung to his beard and this annoyed him so much that he made a vow never to eat unprepared millet again. From that time this was the second totem of the clan.

2. *Abasambo*. These have as their primary totem *e<sub>pu</sub>*. No one seems to know exactly what this word signifies. It seems to be used as a form of emphatic assertion, either in affirmation or denial, but it is claimed that in this case it represents an unknown animal, like a small gazelle or a large hare, which was captured in Mpororo by certain members of the clan, who quarrelled and fought as to who should take it to the Mugabe. The side which conquered called the animal *e<sub>pu</sub>* and took it as their totem.

The second totem of this clan was a house burnt down; no member of the clan might eat food or salt taken from a burning house, no vessels taken from such a house might be used, and they might not tread upon its site or touch the dust of it. It was said that a man from the original stock of the Basambo who had *e<sub>pu</sub>* as their totem was sent one day to bring out salt and butter from a burning house. Before he got out the roof fell on him and he was burned to death. From this event the clan took their secondary totem.

3. *Abagahe*. Totem, a striped cow, *lubombo*. The milk and the flesh of such a cow were taboo to all members of the clan, with the exception of the owner of the cow.

*Sub-divisions of the clan Abahinda with their Totems*

CLAN	TOTEMS
1 Ebyanga	<i>Nkima</i> (black-faced monkey) and <i>Bulo</i> (small millet)
Members of this clan were looked upon as the Mugabe's special friends, and from it he chose his private guards	
2. Enyana	<i>Nkima</i> and <i>Bulo</i>
This clan had charge of the Mugabe's cows, and from it he chose his chief herdsmen.	
3. Abanga	<i>Nkima</i> and <i>Bulo</i>
4. Engangula	do.
A clan of warriors	
5 Abataunga	do.
A clan of warriors.	
6. Ebirekeze	do.
A clan of warriors.	
7 Ebyangula	do.

CLAN	TOTEMS
8. Abazozo	<i>Nkima and Bulo</i>
9. Nkalanga	do.
A clan of princes.	
10. Abalwanyi	do
11. Abamwango	do.
12. Emanga	do.
13. Obwoma	do.
14. Abazugu	do.
15. Abatagweramu	do
16. Abatukula maisho (red-eyed)	do
17. Abayangwe	do
The members of this clan had the task of purifying the Mugabe and painting him with white clay.	
18. Abatira	<i>Nkima, Bulo</i> and the breasts of women nursing female children
Any woman of the clan who had a female child took a piece of cow-dung, squeezed a little milk from her breast on it, and handed it to a member of the clan to throw away in the kraal. The members of this clan had much freedom in the royal presence, and might even make jokes there.	
19. Abakimbua	<i>Bulo</i> and a cow which bore a calf hind feet foremost
The milk of such a cow might not be drunk by the clan until the cow had borne another calf in the usual way. The flesh of the cow was also taboo, should it die or be killed without having borne another calf. Though members of the Bahunda clan, these had not the totem of the black-faced monkey.	
20. Abasonga	<i>Nsenene</i> (green grasshopper) and <i>Bulo</i>
Had not the black-faced monkey. Some members of this clan claimed that they also had as totem a black cow and that only the owner of such a cow might drink its milk or eat its flesh. They claimed that having this third totem they might intermarry with other clans of the Bahunda, but others disputed this.	
21. Abaikizi	<i>Nsenene, Bulo</i> and food added to a pot in which some was already being cooked
No food might be added to any which was being cooked, if more was required, it must be cooked separately.	
22. Abafuma embogo	<i>Nkima and Bulo</i>
23. Abatalaka	<i>Nsenene, Bulo</i> and the breasts of women nursing female children
24. Abungela	<i>Nkima and Bulo</i>
25. Abafwana	do.

## CLAN

## TOTEMS

- 26 Abaigara ?  
This was a clan presented to the Mugabe by his mother, and they became the royal shoemakers.
- 27 Abaswaswi ?  
The carriers of the royal spear, *Nyamirunga*. When the Mugabe Ntare kita Banyoro was driven from his country by the Banyoro and lost all his cattle, he was in exile for years. Having no cattle, he and his companions were forced to live on honey, roots, seeds and wild fruit until at last a man of the Abaswaswi clan went off to hunt and to spy out the state of the land. He made friends with some of the Banyoro, and dwelt with them until he managed to steal a cow and calf with which he returned to the Mugabe. The latter, much pleased at getting what he considered real food for the first time for months, declared that this man and some member of his clan after him should have the honour of carrying the royal spear. A short time later the medicine-man asked the Mugabe to give him the calf that he might use it to take an augury concerning the Banyoro. The Mugabe went through the usual process of spitting into the calf's mouth and making it swallow the spittle, and next morning the calf was killed and the intestines and lungs examined by the medicine-man who read therefrom a good augury, assuring them that they would return to their own country and recover their lost cattle within a short time. Before long all happened as he had foretold.
- 28 Abartweno ?  
From this clan came the men who milked the cows for the use of the Mugabe.
29. Abakungu ?  
These guarded the royal kraal against the danger of grass-fires spreading and setting fire to it.
- 30 Abamijwa ?  
These guarded the royal kraal against the danger of grass-fires spreading and setting fire to it.
- 31 Abahangwe ?  
These guarded the royal kraal against the danger of grass-fires spreading and setting fire to it. They also took the clothing from the dead Mugabe, prepared the body for burial, took it to Esanza, and on their return informed the new Mugabe and the people that the Mugabe had been re-born a lion and was alive in the forest.
32. Abayurunto ?  
A man from this clan bathed the king during his coronation ceremonies.

Divisions 1-15 were those from which the Mugabe chose his principal chiefs. Men from the pure Abahinda stock might not marry any women of the Abayangwe or the Abafuma embogo sub-divisions, but were at liberty to intermarry with other sub-divisions.

*Sub-divisions of the clan Abasambo with their Totems*

CLAN	TOTEMS
1. Abenemurari	<i>Epu</i> and house burnt down
Two chiefs of the Abasambo, Murari and Kukari, who were said to have come from Egypt, wandered as far as Tanganyika and, coming back through Ruanda to Mpororo, they met a woman, Kitami, who governed the country, and one of them married her. They took as their totem <i>Epu</i> and a house burnt down, also a house in which the doorway had been changed from one place to another, and a woman who had had a child by her own father. They claimed descent from Bene, son of Bene Karigira, son of Bene Mafundo, son of Bene Mugambo, son of Abakoroboza, son of Abachuregenyi.	
2. Abenekiwondwa	<i>Epu</i> and house burnt down
3. Abenebihuri	do
4. Abenekukari	do
5. Abenemukonji	do
6. Abenerugambaje	do
7. Abenekireni	do
8. Abenemuganga	do.
9. Abawezu	do
10. Abanyabusana	do
11. Abanyasi	do.
12. Abasali	do
13. Abanyika	do
14. Abatema	do.
15. Abaririra	do
16. Abanerukima	do
17. Abanyonzi	do.
18. Abanyaruranyi	do
19. Abaturagara	do
20. Abanyamugamba	do
21. Abenekahaya	do
22. Abanzua	do.
23. Abasitiaba	<i>Epu</i> and house burnt down and <i>Siti</i> (a red seed used for beads)

They may not handle *siti* (seeds of the *hirikuli*?)



- | CLAN             | TOTEMS  |
|------------------|---|
| 24. Abatwe       | <i>Epu</i> and house burnt down<br>A division of the Abasitiaba. A father who was old and sick called to his sons in the early morning to go and milk. As it was cold and raining they did not go at once. The old man cursed them for not obeying him and died saying they must not milk cows again. They kept cows but never milked them, though they herded them. They had to call men from other sub-divisions to do the milking, and, should a man refuse without good reason, he was accused to the Mugabe, who deprived him of his cattle. |
| 25. Abaitenya    | <i>Epu</i> , house burnt down and cow of a yellowish colour<br>They neither drink the milk nor eat the flesh of a yellow cow.   |
| 26. Abasenzia    | <i>Epu</i> and <i>Siti</i>  |
| 27. Abam         | <i>Epu</i> and <i>Ruhuzumu</i> (black and white cow)<br>These separated from the clan because of a fight over milk when a man was killed.   |
| 28. Abakungu     | <i>Epu</i> and house burnt down   |
| 29. Abanemucwa   | do  |
| 30. Abenebutundu | do.   |
| 31. Abasasira    | do.   |
| 32. Abenenyakizi | do.   |
| 33. Abeneguru    | do  |
| 34. Abacecezi    | do  |
| 35. Abemitanzi   | do  |
| 36. Ababyasi     | <i>Epu</i> and <i>Karundarego</i> (a wild creeper)  |
| 37. Abatyabe     | <i>Epu</i> and <i>Siti</i><br>Belonged to the Basambo but separated owing to a quarrel between two children over some red seeds used as beads, <i>siti</i> .  |
| 38. Abahambi     | ?<br>Claim to belong to Abasambo, who do not acknowledge them. The Basambo will not allow them to sleep in their houses nor to bring their bulls into their kraals. Should one sleep with a Musambo in the open, the Muhambi must wake the other should he wish to turn over. If he did not do so, some disaster would happen to them.  |

*Sub-divisions of the clan Abagahe with their Totems*

- | CLAN         | TOTEMS                                       |
|--------------|--|
| 1. Abalisa   | <i>Lubombo</i> (a striped cow)               |
| 2. Abasinga  | Cow with a black stripe                      |
| 3. Abagina   | <i>Ngobe</i> (cow, black with white stripes) |
| 4. Abazigaba | <i>Ngabo</i> (black and white cow)           |
| 5. Abangwi   | <i>Lubombo</i>                               |

CLAN	TOTEMS
6. Abatorogo	<i>Lubombo</i> and <i>Siti</i>
7. Abasita	Black cows
8. Abakibiza	<i>Ngobe</i>
9. Abalega	do
10. Abasegi	<i>Lutumi</i> (tongues of cows)
11. Abamoh	<i>Ngabo</i>
12. Ababito	do.
13. Abeneburaro	<i>Ngobe</i>
14. Abanyigana	do.
15. Abenekumba	do
16. Abakurungo	do
17. Abanyara	do
18. Abenemakuma	do.
19. Abayanzi	do.
20. Abaziro	do
21. Abataya	do.
22. Abanuma	do
23. Abanyakafunzo	do.
24. Abamigwa	<i>Ngobe</i> and a tail-less cow
25. Abarura	<i>Ngabo</i>
26. Abanyimbi	<i>Ngobe</i>
27. Abenyitaka	do.
28. Ababuga	do.
29. Abayanja	do
30. Abaisanza	do.

## CHAPTER II

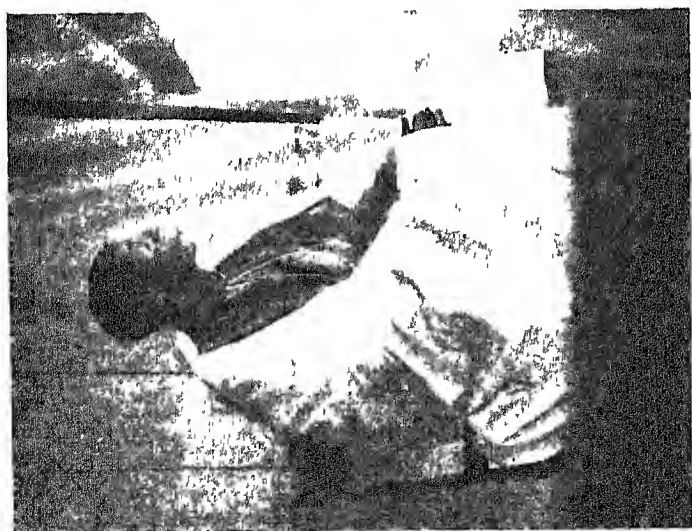
### GOVERNMENT

Autocratic rule of the Mugabe—powers and duties of the *Nganzi* or chief minister—pastoral chiefs and the land—the Mugabe's court—guarding the Mugabe—districts and the district chiefs or *Bakungu*—possessions and powers of the *Bakungu*—inferior chiefs—the *Bagalagwa*, chiefs by grants from the Mugabe—employment of herdsmen—agricultural labourers—law and order—right of appeal—causes of strife—fines and confiscations—punishment by detention—taxation of cattle and grain—murder, homicide, and suicide

THE government of the country of Ankole was autocratic and the power was in the hands of the Mugabe or ruler, whose rule was absolute and his decision on any matter final. In order, however, to ease his shoulders of some of the burden of government, he delegated a good deal of his authority to different chiefs, thus creating what might be called the nucleus of a more democratic government while retaining in his own hands the supreme power

After the Mugabe, the most powerful man in the country was a chief who held the title of *Nganzi*, or "favourite." His office corresponded to that of *Kalikaro*, a title which has now been introduced by the Europeans from Buganda, to which country it properly belongs. His power in the land and his influence with the Mugabe were great, and he often acted as the Mugabe's representative and judged cases of appeal from the jurisdiction of the chiefs. One of his duties was to inform the Mugabe when cases of appeal were waiting to be heard. Wherever the Mugabe went, whether on a journey or to war, the *Nganzi* accompanied him; he was the royal confidant and was the only man, with the exception of the Mugabe's personal pages, who had the right to enter the royal presence at any time of the day or night.

The *Nganzi* was always a wealthy man, for he was continually receiving presents of cattle and land from the Mugabe.



Pastoral (*Muhuma*) chief



The *Nganzi* (principal chief), his wife, daughter and son



Euphorbia tree under which court used to sit

The pastoral chiefs never regarded their land as part of their wealth, for that was always calculated by the number of cows they possessed. Land, however, was indirectly of value, for the agricultural people who resided upon a chief's estates might be called upon to work for him, and they kept him supplied with beer, grain, and vegetable food. Though all the land was open to herdsmen for pasturing their cows, if any dispute arose between herdsmen regarding pasturage, the chief to whom the land belonged could claim the prior right. Such disputes seldom arose except with regard to watering-places. The *Nganzi* had estates in various parts of the country where large numbers of peasants lived and worked for him, and he had great herds of cattle which were pastured all over the land under his herdsmen. He himself always lived in a kraal built in front of the gate of the Mugabe's kraal, for he had to be available whenever the Mugabe wanted him.

When a subject appealed from the decision of any chief to the Mugabe, the latter might order the *Nganzi* or one of his favourite pages to try the case, but disputes concerning cattle in which more than fifty cows were involved, cases where women were accused of deserting their husbands, and other matters of a serious nature had to be brought before him in person. He took no fee for judging a case though, when a fine was imposed, he had the right to take two cows and the *Nganzi* also took two.

The Mugabe's court was not held daily, but the *Nganzi* informed his master whenever a case awaited judgment. The court was held in the open where the Mugabe sat under the shade of a tree. With the exception of those in the forests, the trees of the country were as a rule not large, and the only kind not cut down for building purposes or fire-wood was the tall *Candelabra euphorbia*. Under the shade of one of these, therefore, the royal leopard-skin rug of the Mugabe was generally spread when his court met. He used no seat or stool, but squatted on his haunches in the typical attitude of the cow-people. He usually carried the ordinary walking-stick, a forked stick six to seven feet long, called *Esando*, and his

spears and shield were placed near him. The *Nganzi* was in attendance, and behind and at both sides of the Mugabe squatted his pages and his private guard. The important chiefs took their seats near the Mugabe, while the ordinary people squatted a little further off, leaving a path by which those who arrived after the Mugabe had taken his seat might go to greet him.

Only well known and loyal men were allowed to enter the Mugabe's presence armed; such a man simply moved his spear from his right to his left hand, while he shook hands with the Mugabe and greeted him. Men who came from a distance and were not well known or those about whose loyalty there was any doubt had to lay down their weapons some little distance away and approach unarmed. As a further precaution one of the guards would stretch a rod over the path and the stranger had to shake hands with the king across this. Care had always to be taken to guard against an attack on the Mugabe's life, for any man who for one reason or another had been deprived of any of his cows, or a chief who had been deposed, would almost certainly seek to avenge himself on the Mugabe. For this reason any man who had been punished for an offence in either of these ways was generally put to death.

The Mugabe usually sat in court till about noon. During this time he might drink beer, but he did so only on rare occasions and as a rule contented himself with smoking. When he left the meeting he might invite one or two men to accompany him and they would eat and drink beer or milk in the royal kraal while the others dispersed to their homes.

The country was divided into some sixteen districts over each of which there was a chief appointed by the Mugabe. These chiefs were called *Bakungu* (sing. *Mukungu*) or *Abamangi*, and were chosen by each Mugabe on his accession. When one of these chiefs died, the king appointed his successor who was generally, though not necessarily, his heir. The titles belonging to these important chieftaincies were. (1) *Ebyanga*. The holder of this office was usually a prince and nearly

always succeeded his father on the throne. He generally gathered round him a large number of friends and adherents who assisted him to secure the throne on his father's death and whom he rewarded by making them important chiefs, (2) *Enyana*. The holder of this office had special responsibility with regard to the Mugabe's cows; (3) *Abanga*; (4) *Engangula*, the holders of which office were warriors, (5) *Abataunga*, the holders of which office were warriors; (6) *Ebirekeze*, (7) *Abatenga*, (8) *Nkalanga*, the holder of which office was always a prince; (9) *Abalwanyi*; (10) *Abacwamango*; (11) *Emanga*; (12) *Abazozo*, (13) *Obwoma*, (14) *Abazugu*; (15) *Abatagwerana*; (16) *Abataremwa*

The *Bakungu* chiefs were always pastoral people and had under them as serfs many agricultural people who dwelt on their land, took charge of their goats, sheep and dogs, and supplied them with grain and beer for their food and drink at such times as they might not, for one reason or another, drink milk. The Mugabe always gave a *Mukungu* chief a present of from one to three hundred cows which became his personal property and were used for the food of the chief and his household. Though these cows were a gift to the man and he regarded them, as well as any others he might possess, as his own property, the Mugabe might deprive him of them all if he saw reason to do so, and no man could sell or exchange cows outside the tribe without the king's permission. It is said that there was once a time when men could do as they liked with all the cows they possessed, but in later times the Mugabe considered himself the owner of all cows in the country. The herds of a *Mukungu* might graze in any part of his district, or, like all cattle-owners, he might send them to any other part of the country

The authority of a *Mukungu* in his own district was limited, for he had no control over the movements of the subordinate chiefs and other people who might take up their residence or pasture their cows there. All the land was free to cattle-owners who might settle where they liked and move when they liked, and the duties of the district-chief were to settle



cases of strife between different owners or their herdsmen, to keep watch over any herds of the Mugabe's cows which were in his district, and to see that the men in charge of them treated the cows properly and did not get into trouble with other herdsmen. There was no animosity between the *Mukungu* and the subordinate chiefs in his district, but the latter were quite independent and only acknowledged him as their superior when some dispute arose among them and required authoritative settlement.

In very recent times, that is, under British authority, one or two of the agricultural people have risen to importance and have been made district-chiefs, but before the influence of western civilisation began to make itself felt such a thing was unknown.

The manner of life of one of these important *Bakungu* chiefs differed in no way from that of the ordinary cow-owner, for he lived in his kraal with a number of his cows about him while the rest of his herds wandered about the country under the care of his herdsmen.

In every district there were a number of inferior chiefs who were subordinate to the *Mukungu* of that district but were, as already explained, quite independent of him, except as regarded their relations with each other. The *Mukungu* himself often conferred chieftainships on friends and relatives who would then settle in his district under the same conditions as the other *Bakuma* or pastoral people who might choose to take up their abode there. These men either brought with them a number of serfs who cultivated the land and provided other labour or they found agricultural people settled there who willingly became their serfs. In addition there were a number of chiefs who were known as *Bagalagwa*. These were men who had been pages in the service of the Mugabe and who had grown too old for such posts. To such men the Mugabe would give estates, cows and serfs. The *Bagalagwa* in each district were under one of themselves and he, in difficult cases, appealed to the *Mukungu* of that district, who in his turn might refer the matter to the Mugabe. In

matters which concerned a number of cows greater than fifty the case had to go direct to the Mugabe and any person who concealed a case was fined, the fine going either to the *Mukungu* or, if the case was important, to the Mugabe.

The pastoral chiefs seldom lived in one place for more than two or at most three years, for it was considered necessary to move frequently to keep the cattle free from disease. They would also move if anyone died in the kraal, but in such a case, though they might move even into another district, it was more usual to settle only a short distance away from the original kraal.

Those pastoral people who owned large herds of cows employed as herdsmen men of the pastoral stock who either possessed no cows or had not enough to support a wife and family. Such a man would become the servant of some rich cow-owner, who supplied him with a number of cows for his own use and for the support of his wife. These cows the herdsman regarded as his own and the real owner had no right to the milk from them, though he might, if he needed it, ask his herdsman to supply him with some, a request which the herdsman was quite at liberty to refuse. The herdsman thus got the milk from these cows, and his own cows, if he had any, got the use of the bull of his master's herd and of the salt provided for his master's cows, while the only return he had to make was to herd his master's cows.

These herdsmen were quite free to leave their masters without any warning. If some request, perhaps of a young bull for meat or a cow-hide for clothing, was refused, a herdsman would show his displeasure by absenting himself from the kraal. If his master showed no signs of willingness to come to an agreement, he would return to fetch his wife and they would depart to place themselves under some other master, leaving their former one to manage as best he could.

Each cow-owner had also attached to him a large number of agricultural workers, a *Mukungu* having from one to three hundred of these serfs. The land was all in the Mugabe's hands

and he granted portions to the chiefs for their serfs to cultivate. The herdsmen were forbidden to trespass with their cows on such cultivated land. The chief might bring his serfs with him when he moved to a new part of the country, or he might find agricultural workers already settled there. These serfs were free to leave their masters at any time but they never attempted to set up establishments for themselves and live independently unless they had the direct permission and sanction of the Mugabe, who might for some special reason grant a portion of land to one of them as his own estate. In addition to supplying their pastoral masters with grain and beer, they looked after their dogs, goats and sheep, and did their building and other labour for them.

The chief of a kraal settled all matters within the kraal unless there was any serious disturbance resulting in a fight, in which case he had to appeal to the district-chief. Should the fact that he had tried to keep such a case secret come to light he had to pay the fine of a bull, which went to the *Mukungu* or the Mugabe according to the seriousness of the case.

The *Mukungu* chiefs were thus responsible for keeping the peace in their own districts, but a large amount of bribery and corruption went on. A dissatisfied client, however, was at liberty to appeal from these smaller courts, if indeed they could be called courts, to the Mugabe, and any case involving a number of cows greater than fifty had to go to the higher court.

The most frequent causes of strife were connected with the cows. One set of herdsmen would attempt to drive another herd away from the watering-place where they were drinking or to deprive them of their salt water, and a free fight would ensue. Fights also arose when one man considered himself defrauded. If a man killed a cow and distributed the meat, he might use force to get the payment promised by those who had bought it, instead of taking the correct course of suing them for debt in the courts. There were also sometimes cases when a man had promised a woman relative in marriage

and, having received part of the marriage fee, refused to fulfil his side of the bargain.

When a case was brought before the district-chief, both accused and accuser had to bring a cow as the fee, and the chief as a rule kept both cows, though in some cases one might be given to the owner of the kraal from which the injured man came. If anyone had been hurt in a quarrel, the *Mukungu* usually brought the case to the notice of the Mugabe. Should the injury have been caused by stone-throwing, the Mugabe took one cow from the offender, or, if both parties had suffered injuries, he took one cow from each. If the fight had been more serious and spears had been used, all the cattle of both parties were confiscated and held until the case had been tried. An injured man seldom received any compensation, though, in very rare cases, the Mugabe might order a fine of one cow to be paid to a man who had been seriously hurt. If a man died from his injuries, his relatives received a number of cows according to the Mugabe's decision, and two cows out of every ten of such a fine were paid to the Mugabe, the *Nganzi*, or the *Mukungu*, as the case might be. This proportion of the fine was the only payment taken by the Mugabe when cases came to his court.

There was no place of detention for people who had committed a crime nor was this used as a form of punishment, though sometimes in a serious case a man might be put in stocks, consisting of logs of wood into which one or both feet were thrust through holes cut in the logs. Such detention, however, was only practised in the case of doomed men and was very rare, for such men were generally put to death at once and there was no necessity for detention.

A criminal who had escaped to some distant place and was caught there, might be tied with a rope when being brought back, but even that was considered to be too degrading to the accused.

The chief method of punishment was by fine, and, should an accused man not appear to answer the charge against him, he lost his case and was deprived of all his possessions.

## TAXATION

The chiefs had no right to levy a tax upon the people in their districts. Every year the Mugabe sent his men into each district to collect a number of cows. The messengers had power to take as many cows as they thought fit, but the usual proportion was two cows from a herd of one hundred and one from a herd of fifty. Herds under fifty paid no tax, so that two or three herdsmen who had joined together to set up an independent kraal were free of tax until their herd amounted to over fifty cows.

Twice each month a district-chief had to send beer and millet to the royal kraal for the use of the Mugabe's household, and the Mugabe's own peasants took beer and grain to him daily. Though a peasant always supplied his master with grain and beer, there was no stipulated amount and he was free to refuse if his store was running short.

## MURDER

A murderer had to go about his work very cleverly if he was to escape the penalty of his deed, for it was the business of the whole clan of a murdered man to discover and kill the murderer. Murders were thus not very common and few murderers escaped detection. It was not necessary, however, to discover in all cases the actual criminal, for, if it was found that he had escaped into safety, the members of the injured clan attempted to capture and kill any member of the murderer's clan, irrespective of age or sex, for any life would pay for a life and satisfy the ghost.

It was, however, preferable to find the actual murderer, and, as soon as the deed was discovered, the chief of the district was informed and a search instituted among the dwellers in that district for the culprit. A suspected man against whom there was no real proof might be watched for some time until he betrayed himself by a chance word or act. If, however, the search was unavailing, a diviner would be set to work to discover by an augury the name of the guilty

man. When such a step was taken, the fear of magic, added to the dread of the vengeance of the ghost, usually led the murderer to reveal himself.

The clan of a murdered man rarely made any appeal to the Mugabe; if they did, it was generally for a spear with which to kill the murderer. Sometimes, however, if the clan of the murderer was very powerful and revenge was impossible or might have serious consequences, the weaker clan would appeal to the Mugabe in order to get a peaceful settlement and compensation. The Mugabe might give a powerful clan three months in which to produce the person of the murderer, and the case would then be tried.

It was not necessary for the Mugabe himself to be present at such a trial, but some member of the Bayangwe clan had to be there. When the trial took place, the relatives of the murderer brought a cow and a sheep to the place. These were killed and the Mugabe or his representative called for six men from each side and stood between them while they dipped their fingers in a vessel containing the blood of the animals and swore to be friendly. Then the fine was paid and the matter ended. From the fine paid by the murderer's clan, two or three cows went to the king and, in addition to the fine, the murderer or his clan gave a cow in milk and its calf to the father of the murdered man. This method of settling the matter was called *Kirabo*.

Sometimes, however, a more formal procedure was gone through at the trial. The murderer's clan brought a sheep and a bull, and both clans mustered in force and stood on opposite sides of some open space while the Mugabe stood between them. A branch of the sacred tree *kirakiti* was planted beside him and one of the drums which, as described in chapter IV, were attendants on the sacred drums, was placed there. Each party then rubbed a little butter on the tree as a sign that they wanted peace, and declared to the Mugabe their desire to settle the case amicably. The Mugabe next summoned a man from the offender's clan and bade him pluck a little wool from the sheep and hand it to a member

of the injured clan, who put it on the tree and proceeded to go through the same process, handing the wool to the former man, who put it also on the tree. A pot of beer was now handed to the man from the offender's clan who drank and passed it to the other to drink. A pipe was next handed to the former who smoked and passed it to the other and both puffed the smoke over the tree. The bull was killed and the blood caught and brought to the two men, who smeared each other's hands with it and swore friendship. The meat of the bull was cooked in the open and all the people partook of it as a sign of the renewal of friendship. The Mugabe then beat the drum, announced that they were reconciled, and swore to stand by the injured party should the covenant be broken by either. When things were not thus settled, the king generally took the whole of the murderer's property; but if the clans were reconciled, he imposed a fine, sometimes amounting to one hundred cows, of which some twenty went to him and the rest to the injured party. Should the fine be forty cows, the Mugabe took six of them. After this the murderer might return to his home and fear no further trouble from the other clan. No murderer might sleep on a bed, but had to lie on the floor until the case was tried and settled.

If a man killed another accidentally, he escaped to some place of safety until he could explain his conduct and arrange matters. The dead man's clan asked for compensation, and the Mugabe heard the case in open court and fixed the amount of the fine.

A suicide for whose deed no reason could be found was buried in waste land, but if a man or woman committed suicide for grief at the death of a relative they were buried with much honour, for it was looked upon as a laudable act. In almost all cases suicides were buried like other people and the usual mourning ceremonies were gone through.

## CHAPTER III

### RELIGION AND BELIEF

Ruhanga, the creator—divine dynasty of kings—fetishes and shrines of different gods—story of Kyomya and the drums—the earthquake god—importance of the ghosts—family ghosts and offerings—foreign ghosts—re-birth of the dead—spirits of rulers enter lions—offerings to the Mugabe's ancestors—medicine-men and methods of taking auguries—fetishes and amulets—rain-making—blood-brotherhood—dreams

THERE was little in the way of formulated religion, for, though there were gods who were acknowledged as superior beings, there were no priests, the duties usually performed by such men being left to mediums and medicine-men, and there were no temples and only a few sacrifices, which were performed by the medicine-men.

The creator was Ruhanga, who was thought to have lived in the sky. He was known as Creator and Powerful One, but no prayers were offered to him though his name was used in ejaculations such as "Tata Ruhanga," an exclamation used in joy at the birth of a child and accompanied by clapping the hands. Another ejaculation in which the name was used was "Ruhanga akutambire!" "May god heal you!"

Ruhanga created a man Rugabe and his wife Nyamate and set them to people the earth. They were not ordinary mortals, for they had no mother but were both created by Ruhanga. They had a son, Isimbwa, who was the first of a dynasty of kings who ruled the country and who did not die, but became the gods of the people. These deified kings had no temples, but there were certain men and women who claimed to be their mediums and agents and to be able to cure sickness and help the people. The list of these early kings was given as follows:

Isimbwa, son of Rugabe—Ndahaura—Wamara—Ruhinda—Nkubayazurama—Owanyira—Rugamba naMazu—Nyabugaro—Kasasira—Rumongi—Mirindi—Ntare kita Banyoro—Macwa.



Another list which was also given differed from the first:

Kazoba — Wamara — Kagoro — Ndahaura — Mugenyi — Kyomya  
— Twona — Ryangombe — Nyakiriro — Kiro — Mugasa — Timbwe  
— Karuzi — Kalinzi.

Each of the principal gods had his special fetish and the guardians of these lived in the Mugabe's kraal. The most popular deity was Kagoro, and his medium carried his emblem about to kraals where help was needed. Wherever it went, a cow was given and a shrine built to the god.

Kazoba had a special shrine in the country of the clan Baisanza, whose members went there to ask for favours, taking to him cattle and beer.

Mugasa was a royal deity and was also specially concerned with this clan Baisanza. If anyone else wished to consult this god, he had to approach him through an appointed member of the clan who might intercede for him.

When any person applied to Nyakiriro, he had to present him with one or two copper bracelets and a cow

Wamara was said to be the god of plenty and fertility, and when a woman had twins, the elder was dedicated to him and the other to Kagoro. After the birth the mother presented a cow to each of these gods. These were kept alive and only women might drink the milk from them. This was done to preserve the husband, the children, and the herds from death.

The mother of Kyomya was said to have been a princess and the sister of Wamara. Wamara married her and they had one son, Kyomya. Later Wamara sent the woman away but kept the son, who became a trader and wandered to Bukoba with salt, coffee-berries, cats, and other goods. When he returned to Ankole, he became herdsman to a cow-man named Kyana who, in addition to herding, made him fetch fire-wood. Soon the wife of Kyana began to suspect that Kyomya was not an ordinary mortal and she and her husband laid all kinds of traps for him, but he evaded them all. At last one day while he was getting fire-wood, Kyomya discovered the sacred drums which his father Wamara had received from the moon and which Kyana had stolen. He flicked his fingers and the drums

came to him, and a few days later he left Kyana to take the drums back to his father at Ruwanda in Ankole near Kabula. After that he left the world and became a god

The earthquake god was originally called Omusisi, but of recent years some people have claimed to be the mediums of an earthquake god called Nabinge. This is probably the name used for Omusisi by another branch of the pastoral people, from whom it has now been introduced into Ankole. These priests built a hut and hung about in it objects which rattled and made a noise when shaken. When anyone came to consult them, the priests made a noise like the rumbling of an earthquake and shook the hut until it seemed as if it were falling down. This so terrified the applicants that they willingly made offerings to the sham mediums in order to ward off the danger which threatened.

At the time when Ruhanga created the first man and woman, he also created a peasant man and woman to be their servants and these were the ancestors of the serfs

The really important supernatural beings were the ghosts. These had their abode in another world which was, however, of little importance, for they spent most of their time hovering round the living, helping them or visiting their displeasure upon them according to the treatment they received from their surviving relatives and friends, and punishing any infringements of clan law and custom. They were never seen but their presence was felt, for the wind which blew amongst the trees and grass of the grazing-grounds showed the presence of ghosts of the cow-people, while those of peasants were heard rustling amongst the grain or in the plantain trees. It was to these ghosts rather than to the great gods that the people turned for help and to them they made offerings and prayers.

All classes of the people from the Mugabe downwards had shrines for the family ghosts, and cows were dedicated to them. These were kept alive and the milk from them was daily placed on a special stand devoted to the ghost, where it remained for some time until the ghost had taken its meal

of the essence, after which the remainder was drunk by the owner of the house and those of his children who lived with him. On the side of the bed furthest from the door in the hut was the sacred place where milk for the ghost of the owner's father was placed. The special pot for it was called *kyenzimu*. If the owner's mother was dead, a pot for her ghost, called *ekyenshugi*, might also be placed there.

It was only the ghosts of men who were universally feared, but women feared the ghosts of women, for they were sometimes dangerous to women of their own clan and to children. If a woman's ghost was the cause of sickness among children, the mother would persuade her husband to give milk to pacify the ghost. Another method of laying such a ghost was for the woman to go to cross-roads, build a shrine, and offer a little beer and grain. If this did not have the desired effect, the woman persuaded her husband to accompany her to her own clan where they offered a goat, or, in extreme cases, even a cow to the ghost.

Even the poorer herdsmen had their little shrines for ghosts and dedicated the milk from certain cows to their departed relatives, the owner of the shrine drinking the milk afterwards. When the departed intimated in some way that he desired to have a meal, the owner of the shrine brought either a fat cow or a bull, which was secured near the shrine during the night. In the early morning it was killed and the owner of the shrine and his clan-brothers ate the meat near the shrine.

When the ghost of a man, who had come from another country and died, was causing trouble to any member of a clan, a bull was taken either to the hills overlooking the country from which the man came or to the path by which he came. The animal was dedicated to the ghost and they called upon it to accept the offering, after which they killed the bull and ate or gave away all the flesh. The bones were burned to dust, for nothing might be left or taken back.

It was not easy to discover the actual belief of the people with regard to the final state of the ghosts, but it seemed that they were supposed to be re-born in their grandchildren. This

was not precisely stated, but people said that certain graves might safely be left untended, with only a tree to mark the spot, though as long as the ghost was disembodied, the grave had to be distinguished and a shrine kept near it for offerings. Children were called by the names of former members of the clan because it was thought that the ghosts would then take an interest in them and help them.

There were no ghosts of trees or animals, for only human beings were thought to have spirits which became ghosts.

The ghosts of kings, however, did not remain spirits but entered into lions. When a lion became dangerous, a medicine-man had to be consulted before any steps could be taken to get rid of it. This man had to discover by augury whether the attacks were merely the act of a ravenous animal seeking prey or whether they were a sign that the Mugabe had neglected to make such offerings as would satisfy the spirits of his ancestors. In the Mugabe's kraal there was a place called *Kagondo* which was devoted to the shrines of past rulers, and there frequent offerings were made and milk from dedicated cows was placed daily for a time before being drunk by the special cow-men who herded these cows and by the men who guarded the shrines.

When an offering was required, a cow past bearing or a bull was brought in the evening to a place near the shrine, where a rope was tied to its leg. The other end of the rope was buried in a hole about a foot deep and the earth was beaten down hard so that the animal was secured. It was left there during the night for the ghost to examine and accept it, and a guard from the royal clan, Bayangwe, kept watch over it. In the early morning the Mugabe came and offered the animal to the ghost, saying, "This cow I give to you; in return pray cause me no more trouble." An offering of this kind was made when the Mugabe felt ill and an augury proved that the illness was caused by the ghost of one of his ancestors. Animals for food were killed by being poleaxed just behind the horns, the axe being driven well into the skull, but a cow for a sacrifice was killed by cutting its throat. The blood was allowed to

run on the ground near the shrine and the meat was eaten by the Mugabe and the members of the royal clan on the spot. Sometimes it happened that the meat lasted several days and a fresh set of relatives of the Mugabe were called to eat it each day, for none of it might be taken away, and all must be cooked and eaten near the spot where the animal was killed. The head of the animal was eaten by the special men who looked after the fire-wood.

When one of the cows which had been dedicated to the ghosts was killed, the herdsmen of the herd from which that animal was taken received some of the meat, their share being cut from the back without any bones. No bones might be broken in killing the animal or afterwards in cutting up the meat, and all that was not eaten had to be consumed by fire so that nothing was left.

#### MEDICINE-MEN

Ghosts and magic were the causes commonly assigned to illness and the first duty of a medicine-man who had been called in to a case was to discover by augury the cause, for upon this the treatment depended. The methods employed in dealing with cases of illness will be more fully dealt with in the chapter on Illness, p. 134.

Medicine-men, however, were consulted in other matters and auguries were taken in all kinds of difficulties. The Mugabe, or any of the people who could afford to pay large fees, summoned a diviner, who examined the entrails of cattle, sheep, or fowls, or used some other of what were considered the superior methods of taking the augury.

One diviner, who was specially called in to discover the cause of any illness of the Mugabe, used two sticks and an insect called *ntondo*. He fixed one stick upright in the ground and placed the other in a slanting position against it. On the sloping stick he put an insect and made a noise as if spitting upon it until it began to move; then he repeated to it the names of royal ancestors who might be the cause of the illness. If the insect turned towards him, he knew that the name was

not that of the ghost responsible for the Mugabe's state of health, and he tried name after name until the insect walked up the stick, thus declaring that the ancestor last named was the cause of the illness. Offerings were then made, as already described, to the ghost of that ancestor at his shrine in the Mugabe's kraal.

In another case a number of holes, shaped like troughs for watering cattle but not so big, were made. The Mugabe or the chief concerned was given a little of certain herbs finely powdered on which he spat to bless them and whispered to them his wishes. The diviner enclosed this powder in balls of clay and dropped one in each water hole. He took butter and oiled his hands well and then broke up the balls of clay in the water and sprinkled more of the powder on it. From the forms taken by this powder he gave his augury. If it was good, some of the water was put on the breast, shoulders, and forehead of the enquirer, to whom the blessing was thus conveyed.

Another test was known as the butter test, when a diviner was going to use this, he filled six to ten cooking-pots with water and put them on the fire. When the water boiled, the medicine-man took a bunch of herbs, *ezubwi*, dipped it in the boiling water and squeezed it into each pot until the water was discoloured. A piece of butter was handed to the enquirer who whispered his wishes over it and the medicine-man then dropped a bit of it into each pot. According to the way in which the butter melted and spread in the water, he gave his verdict. Should a fly or other insect fall into the pots during the process the test was invalid and they had to begin afresh. If the augury was good, the enquirer was anointed with the water from the pots.

These superior medicine-men also worked auguries with animals. A fowl, goat, sheep, or bull, according to the importance of the case, was killed and the medicine-man examined the markings on the intestines and on the lungs, which he stretched, in order to discern the markings better, by inserting his finger into them. When the Mugabe wished to go

to war he appealed to some of these medicine-men to tell him whether the expedition would be successful, and the chief medicine-man always accompanied the army and took auguries at intervals during the course of the campaign.

The poorer people could not afford to consult these higher medicine-men, who were known as *Bafumu*, but they applied to those of a lower class, *Omulaguzi*, who took auguries by scattering seeds or by throwing sticks into water, or other such methods. One man used a number of bits of stick, which had to be six, twelve, or fourteen. He made a pretence of spitting on them and declared to them the cause which required the augury. He then threw them into a pot of water and gave the augury from their position.

Another medicine-man took a cup of millet and six, twelve, or fourteen stones or lumps of mud over which he made a pretence of spitting while telling them the problem which required solution. He threw the millet and the stones or mud on to a skin and, watching the position in which they fell, read therefrom the augury.

### FETISHES AND AMULETS

There were few fetishes used, the chief of them being the royal fetishes known as *Mirimbo*, which were horns filled by certain medicine-men with herbs and other ingredients. The maker pronounced incantations over these before he filled in the ends. Claws and teeth of animals, and even hollow roots and pieces of bamboo, were used as receptacles for medicine said to be blessed by some particular god. The object thus filled was sold by the medicine-man and was said to contain the essence of the god and to be of value in battle or against wild beasts or in other dangers.

Amulets were made by different medicine-men and medicine-women as charms against a variety of evils. There was a special kind, called *ngisa* or *mpaka*, which was made by women-doctors (*Omusuzi*) to be worn by women who desired to have children. These women-doctors made amulets for women only, while the medicine-men (*Bafumu*) dealt both with men and

women. The remnant of any herb which had proved efficacious in illness was often made into an amulet to guard against a recurrence of the same disease. Amulets were also used as charms against fever, snake-bite, attack from wild beasts, eye diseases, swellings on the body and other troubles.

In time of war, women wearing fetishes went round a *kirikiti* tree rubbing it upwards with butter with their hands and praying to it to guard some individual in the battle.

#### RAIN-MAKING

The rain-makers of Ankole belonged entirely to the serf class and were called *Abaizi be nzura*. Their fetishes were horns of antelope and male sheep and were filled with herbs and such ingredients as they considered suitable for their purpose.

When the people wanted rain they took a black sheep to the rain-maker, who killed it, allowing the blood to flow on his fetish. He then built a shrine in which he put the fetish and he and his clients ate a sacred meal of the flesh of the sheep there. Beside this shrine he also pronounced his incantations and prayers for rain. From this time until the rain fell the rain-maker had to practise sexual abstinence, for indulgence would render his charms ineffective.

All kinds of gifts might be brought to the rain-maker by the people who came to ask for rain. The Mugabe always sent a cow and others brought hoes, millet, or sheep. If the rain-maker considered that the pay offered was inadequate, the chief of the district might take from the people by force what was necessary to pay him.

If the rain did not come and the people showed their annoyance by troubling the rain-maker, he might become angry and, by redoubling his efforts, bring not only rain but hail and thunder.

These rain-makers had the power to stop rain by their fetishes, and they also blew through whistles to raise a wind which might carry off the clouds and cause the rain to cease.



There was also another man, Kuamula, who could stop rain, but he was looked upon as an evil person and not regarded in the same light as a legitimate rain-maker. He made a bundle of dried and rotten *kirikiti* twigs, pieces of the trees *luwawo*, *bubohaboha* and *namanya-ku-nenakasi*, and earth, and tied this to a reed which he fastened to a post planted in the ground in some secluded spot. Another stick to which he tied meat was put in a sloping position against this post and under it he lit a fire, saying, "I want sun so that my fire may burn and cook my meat. Let there be no rain to extinguish it." This brought drought and famine, unless the people paid him large sums to remove his spells.

### BLOOD-BROTHERHOOD

When two men formed a friendship more than ordinarily close and wished to cement it publicly, they went through a ceremony before witnesses.

One man went to stay the night with the other and in the early morning, before the cows were milked, they came into the kraal and sat on the ground facing each other, while the witnesses, chief among whom was the sister of the man who was host, stood around.

Between the two men were laid a coffee-berry, some leaves from the *kirikiti* tree, and a sharp knife or an arrow such as was used for bleeding the cows. The arrow was preferred for the purpose, and a razor might never be used.

Each man in turn took the arrow, pinched up the flesh near his navel and made a few scratches until he drew a little blood which he caught in the palm of his hand. Each took half the coffee bean, rubbed it in the blood, and placed one or two leaves of the *kirikiti* tree between the fingers of that hand. He then with his other hand took hold of his companion's hand and took the half bean from it with his lips. The host took the arrow and rubbed it against the thumb-nail of the right hand of the other man as though he was cutting it, put it on his head as though shaving the hair, and passed it round his body and down to his right foot as though to cut

the nail of his great toe. The other man then took the arrow and went through the same performance. During the process the man performing the action swore to be true and loyal to the other and his family, saying, "Let me die if I fail to be a true brother." The sister took hold of the right wrist of each and said that they must not part from each other. Each presented her with a bark-cloth or two bracelets before they separated.

### DREAMS

When a man dreamt that he was dead, it meant that some relative or friend, possibly at a distance, was dead.

When a man dreamt that he had received a present, he expected either to receive one himself or to hear of some relative having done so.

When the Mugabe dreamt an unpleasant dream, he sent for medicine-men, who might drive off the evil by making him smell a drug which made him sneeze, or by giving him a certain root to chew. When he had dreamt of evil attacking him or the land, the medicine-man brought a pot of water from which the Mugabe took a sip and spat it out five times. A bunch of herbs, *mwetengo* and *mbuza*, was given to him and he passed them over his head, saying, "Let the evil pass away," spat on them and sent them from his presence.

When he dreamt about war, he called the leading chiefs to him and explained the situation and together they decided whether they should take action.

## CHAPTER IV

### RULERS OF ANKOLE. PART I

Difficulty in obtaining names of rulers—importance of the Mugabe's sister—possible matrilineal succession—list of rulers—relations with neighbouring kings—royal intermarriage—the Mugabe's kraal—the milk—the cows—the entrance—the houses—cooks and brewers—moving the royal kraal—life of the Mugabe—hunting—the court—pages—drinking milk—washing—meals—evening meetings—the Mugabe's bed—the royal drums—the hut—contents of the hut—the chief drums—attendants of the drums—offerings to the drums—spear and staff of the drums—repairing drums—sacrifices to the drums—the drums and war—the Mugabe's cows—herdsmen

WHEN I first visited Ankole more than twelve years ago, it was impossible to obtain from the people any information as to the names of their previous rulers, and the names of the mothers of the rulers were totally unknown. On making enquiries on this, my second visit, I found them prepared with a list of kings, but on neither occasion was I able to obtain the names of any of the kings' wives, brothers or sisters. It seems that contact with other tribes, especially with the Baganda and the Bakitara, aroused a desire to have a genealogy of the royal family, and a list of kings was prepared for the purpose.

It was quite evident that there never was a queen, and that the wives of the Mugabe, or king, never had any official position or took any prominent place in the kingdom. The Mugabe's sister, however, was an important person, though she was not called queen nor was she a wife of the Mugabe. She married whom she pleased and, though the Mugabe would try to induce her to marry some man of his choice, she was not compelled to follow his wishes. The sister of the present Mugabe refused to marry the man he chose for her, even though he attempted to enforce his wishes and was so angry at her refusal that for a long time he would not see her. This, as well as many other customs, especially those connected

with inheritance and the purification ceremonies, points to the probable existence in former times of a custom of matrilineal succession, which, however, the present generation refuses to acknowledge, as they consider such a regime inferior to the patrilineal system which obtains in the surrounding countries, and thus dread the scorn of their neighbours.

Another reason for the difficulty experienced in obtaining any of the names of past kings was that the name of a king was never again mentioned after his death and, moreover, if it corresponded with some word in ordinary use, that word was dropped out of the language. Thus, when the last Mugabe, Ntare, died, the name for a lion, which was *ntare*, was altered to *ekichunchu*.

The list of rulers which I received on my recent visit was as follows:

- |  |                                |                   |
|--|--------------------------------|-------------------|
| 1 Nyamhanga  | 2 Rugabe                       | 3 Isimbwa         |
| 4 Ndaiaura   | 5 Wamara                       | 6. Ruhunda        |
| 7 Nkubayarumama  | 8. Nyeika or Owanyira          | 9 Rugamba na Mazu |
| 10. Nyabugaro  | 11. Kasasira                   | 12. Rumongi       |
| 13. Muindi   | 14 Ntare kita Bunyoro          | 15 Macwa          |
| 16. Kahaya I, in whose reign cattle increased so greatly in the country that a poor man had at least fifty and a rich man's herds ran into thousands. Though rinderpest has now killed thousands of the cattle, yet there are still more in the country than there were at the time when plague last visited them, nearly thirty years ago |                                |                   |
| 17 Lwebishengaze   | 18 Gasiyonga (mother, Bukandu) |                   |
| 19 Mutambukwa (mother, Bawomura)   |                                |                   |
| 20 Ntare, whose mother, Kiloga, was a Munyoro princess   |                                |                   |
| 21 Kahaya II (mother, Nkasi of the Basambo)  |                                |                   |

The old title of the ruler, which is still used as a title of respect, was *Mukama*, but as this was also the title of the ruler of Kitara (or Bunyoro), the British, for the purpose of differentiation, introduced the official title of *Mugabe*.

In the old days, the kingdom was only a small one, but the present district of Ankole includes four other kingdoms, Mpororo, Egara, Bweszu and Busongora. In the past the kings of these countries were always at enmity and none of them ever visited the countries of the others except in war. One of the early British Government officials ordered a king

of Egara to come to Ankole. The king at first refused, but, when pressure was brought to bear, he came, as it seemed, willingly. When, however, he reached a hill from which he could see the houses of the Ankole king, he quickly drew a knife, ripped his stomach across, and fell dead.

Though the kings of the different countries might not meet, it seems to have been quite common for their sons and daughters to intermarry, and when the countries were not actually at war, the people generally went freely from one to another to trade. The traders of Ankole, however, might go into Mpororo only in secret, though they might go openly into any of the other kingdoms. At one time princes of Ankole only married in their own clan, but under king Kahaya I it became usual for them to marry girls from the royal families of other countries.

The kings were thought by the people to have come from heaven and to be the ancestors of all their people, whom they ruled by divine authority. The Mugabe had the power of life and death over all his subjects, and it was believed that his people held their property solely through his clemency, for he was the owner of all the land and all the cattle.

#### THE MUGABE'S KRAAL

The Mugabe's kraal stood in the midst of the dwellings of his chiefs and retainers which formed the capital, *Orurembo*, the royal kraal itself being known as *Kikari kyo Mukama*.

The Mugabe's kraal differed from that of his chiefs only in size, for, as it enclosed many houses for wives and attendants, it covered a very large expanse of ground. The site was changed at least every second year and often every year, for it was thought that fresh ground was necessary to keep the cows clean and free from pests.

The kraal, which was in shape more oval than round, measured about a quarter of a mile across at its broadest part, and was built on a hill or rising ground. In the surrounding fence there was one main entrance, leading into a large open space which was used for cows, though the special cows of

the Mugabe, which numbered one hundred, were not kept there but in two kraals outside the enclosure, fifty in each kraal, and only the cows of wives and resident attendants were kept in the royal kraal.

The cows of the Mugabe were looked after by the royal herdsmen, who carried two large pots of milk to the Mugabe every morning and evening. There was no royal milk-house for his milk, but it was carried from house to house wherever he happened to be, and the pots were strung up on a stick some eight feet long, such as was used by the cow-men for carrying milk-pots from kraals in the country to their masters; this was fastened at each end to the rafters so that it hung horizontally, and the milk-pots were slung upon it.

The cows inside the royal kraal all belonged to the Mugabe's wives and those attendants who were permanent residents. Each house of any importance in the royal kraal had its own courtyard where the cows came by night and where there were houses for the herdsmen and for the calves. The houses of the Mugabe's wives were built at various places within the enclosure and the king had the right to sleep in any house he might choose. Each wife had a number of cows given to her and she had her own herdsmen who looked after them and brought them for the night into the court of her house, where they slept in the open.

The main gate was the only entrance by which visitors were permitted to enter the Mugabe's kraal, but the special servants could enter by two smaller gates, which were placed at the sides of the kraal so that water running down the hill might not flow in by them. Only special guests might enter directly into the Mugabe's presence, others had to wait outside the main entrance while the gate-keeper announced their arrival to the Mugabe. The gate was kept fastened and the visitor had to wait outside, where there were waiting-rooms, while the gate-keeper asked for an interview and returned with the Mugabe's answer. The visitor might be told to wait longer or might even be denied admission altogether. When the main entrance was closed for the night, admission could

only be obtained through a hut at one side in which there were always watchmen.

Inside the main entrance was a large open space for cows in which there was the fire, *nkomi*, the main fire of the kraal. To the left was a large hut for the special herdsman, a number of small huts, and the usual dung-heap on which the daily sweepings of the kraal were piled. On the right of the open space was a second fence dividing it from the private houses of the Mugabe.

Inside this fence was first the house, *Rwemihunda*, and with it five other huts were connected by covered passages. The second was called *Kiniga*, and in it the pages of the Mugabe lived in order to be always within hearing of the summons of the Mugabe wherever he might be. In the third house, *Kageri kamu*, lived two specially favoured wives who took the names of *Enkunwakazi* and *Musongori*. The fourth house, *Watumwoha*, was for women from among whom the Mugabe chose one when he went on any journey or to war. When he went to war a special kraal was built for him and to it he took a young girl, called *Ekinyasunzu*, who made his bed, managed his private matters, and acted as his wife for the time. If on his return she was found to be with child, she was taken to a special house and cared for until the child was born. She was not necessarily a pastoral woman and was not given the rank of one of the Mugabe's wives, for she never covered her head like a married woman, but in other respects she was treated as one of his wives and any child she might give birth to was counted as a prince. In this house also were two wives with the titles *Ntagasya Mukama* and *Karabaraba*, the latter being the wife who sat near the Mugabe at evening meetings and upon whom he leant when he felt tired. She also at such times carried any messages he might wish to send.

The next house, *Buganzi*, was a general house for wives, and *Kabagiriri* was a house for wives who had given birth to children. There were also in the kraal about a hundred houses for wives and their attendants and women of inferior station.

The Mugabe went to any of the houses as it might please him and his pages carried the royal milk-pots and slung them over the pots of the wife with whom he meant to spend the night. Each house was provided with a rod suspended from the roof over the platform where the wife kept her milk-pots, and the pages slung the royal pots on this rod. Two pots were brought to the Mugabe after each milking and he drank milk as a rule four times during the day and four times during the night, drinking twice from each pot.

The quarters of the cooks were also in this part of the kraal, but were divided from the wives' huts by a fence which prevented the Mugabe from seeing what was going on beyond it as he moved about among his wives. When the Mugabe ordered food to be cooked for guests it was carried by a path round the outer part of the enclosure so as not to offend the royal eyes or nose. The chief cooks were named *Obwoma* and *Orwekubo* and, like the fire-wood bearers and water-drawers, they were of the agricultural class.

The brewers lived outside at the back of the royal kraal and daily sent some of the best beer they had into the kraal for the Mugabe's use. There was a hut in the inner part of the kraal where the beer for the daily consumption of the Mugabe was kept and to which the *Bakungu* chiefs also sent beer and grain twice monthly.

The royal kraal was completely surrounded by dwellings, for the brewers, wood-cutters and water-drawers had their huts at the back, the kraals of the leading chiefs lay round the sides, and the *Nganzi* or chief minister had his kraal in front of the gateway. These people acted as general guardians of the Mugabe to prevent any foe from approaching and finding him unprepared.

Whenever the Mugabe wished to move the site of his kraal he consulted the royal medicine-man as to the advisability of the change and as to the choice of a new site. A bull, which had to be entirely black, was brought to the Mugabe, who whispered into its ear, "Stop evil from coming to me, to my children or to my country," and spat into its mouth.



The assistants then threw the animal down and held it while the Mugabe stepped over it and stuck his spear into the ground on the other side. The medicine-man killed the bull and examined its lungs and intestines and he and his companions ate the meat on the spot where it was killed, for none of it might be carried away.

If all was well the new kraal was built, and at the end of six months the medicine-man came again with a fowl and held its beak open until the Mugabe spat into its throat. This fowl was buried alive in the gateway of the new kraal where both people and cattle passed over it, and thus evil was kept from entering and injuring the Mugabe.

As each new house was built either for the Mugabe or anyone else, it was dedicated by having a fowl buried alive in the doorway, while a second fowl was buried at the side of the mound used as the bed so that the owner might step on the place as he went to or left the bed. A special fetish was hung over the door. This consisted of a swallow, which was cut open from the underside of its beak to its tail and dried. The body when ready was stuffed with the herbs *omubuza*, *mweetengo* and *musingo*, bound together at the breast and tail, and suspended over the door to keep evil out and render harmless any magic which might be directed against the inmates.

The fire from which all the fires in a new kraal were started was brought from the Abaitira clan.

#### THE LIFE AND DUTIES OF THE MUGABE

There were no restrictions laid upon the movements of the Mugabe, though he had to be careful not to hurt himself or cause loss of blood. He might move about the country as he liked and often accompanied the royal herdsmen to the pasturage and stayed with the cattle until he felt tired, when he returned to the kraal for a meal and rest. He was generally fond of hunting and might arrange a day's sport. If the place of the hunt was at some distance from the royal kraal he would be carried there, in order to arrive fresh for the sport.

The Mugabe was usually fond of dogs and kept a few in the royal kraal with him, but his pack for hunting was kept for him by peasants outside. When he was taking exercise of this kind he drank only beer and did not eat anything until he got back to his kraal, when he had a meal of beef and after a time drank milk.

At other times the early part of the day was occupied with the business of the kingdom, when the Mugabe tried cases and transacted other business in the outer part of his kraal. During a meeting of the court the Mugabe often smoked but he neither ate nor drank until he had retired to his own houses. When he had done so only the *Nganzi* and his personal pages might approach him uninvited, for the general public might not go beyond the outer part of the royal kraal without special invitation.

The pages of the Mugabe were taken from the sons of chiefs of any clan. They might approach the Mugabe at any time and might even wake him at night to drink milk or to deal with urgent business. While in the service of the Mugabe their bodies were sacred and they held office until they were old enough to marry, when the Mugabe sent them away, giving them chieftainships, cattle and land. These boys were given willingly to the Mugabe in the hope that such service would lead to higher office, and the daughters of chiefs were also sent to the court to be maids to the Mugabe's wives.

One of the duties of these pages was to bring the Mugabe milk at the set times for drinking, for he drank milk four times from the morning milking and four times from the evening. In accordance with the usual custom no milk from the morning milking might be drunk after 4 p.m. that day and none from the evening milking after 4 a.m. All milk left over after that time was used for butter, for to drink milk more than twelve hours old was strictly forbidden.

In the evening, when the Mugabe retired to rest, one or two pages accompanied him to the house in which he chose to sleep and arranged for a supply of milk to be brought there. The Mugabe would drink some before he lay down to sleep

and through the night at set times the guards roused the pages, who had to wake the Mugabe by stroking his face and raising him in order that he might drink again. This became so much of a habit that sometimes he would not wake but would drink the milk in his sleep. The milk might be brought from any of his cows, and the only taboo connected with it was that any left after the Mugabe had partaken had to be finished by the pages.

The milk regulations did not permit the Mugabe to wash his body daily, but he slept at night between buttered bark-cloths and was well rubbed by one of his wives in the morning. Twice a week he had a bath and the pages rubbed him to get off all the old butter, after which he was smeared again with fresh butter. He washed his hands night and morning with warm water brought to his pages by the official water-carriers, who were known as *Bahuko Bakwabiyo*, and came from peasant clans. In the morning the cleansing ceremony was more elaborate than at night. The water was brought in a wooden bowl and the royal medicine-man and some five other medicine-men were in attendance with fetishes. The Mugabe sat on a stool and fetishes were placed in the bowl, on either side of him, and beneath his stool. The Mugabe washed his hands and the chief medicine-man handed him a pot containing a potent snuff which made him sneeze, to drive out all the evils which might have entered him during the night. Until this ceremony was over no one dared ask the Mugabe a question or greet him, even the medicine-men were silent and most of the pages left the hut. The *Nganzi* might remain if he wished, but he also kept silence. After this washing, the Mugabe would hear matters of private interest until the time came to drink the morning milk, which was brought to him about 8 o'clock.

At noon when the Mugabe returned from his various engagements to his own part of the kraal he had a meal of beef with which he drank beer. His beef was usually roasted on spits over a wood fire, though he sometimes had it boiled, in which case a kind of millet-porridge was served with it, the meat

and the porridge being brought in separate wooden dishes. He ate the meat with a wooden two-pronged fork and the porridge with a wooden spoon. A bull or fatted cow was daily killed for food for the inmates of the royal kraal, and the Mugabe's meat was taken from this animal, for he was not restricted to special cows but might eat beef from any. He might, however, only eat the meat from the shoulder, which was cut up into small pieces and cooked for him, while the rest was used for the household and guests. The food was brought to him by pages, and, with the exception of a favourite wife who was in attendance to do anything he might require, no one else might approach while he was eating.

The Mugabe might invite some of his chiefs to a meal after sitting in court but they were served in the courtyard apart from him, though he might send to any specially favoured guest some of the meat from his own table. None of his wives might touch his meat or his milkvessels and any meat that was left over when he had finished had to be eaten by some of his pages. He sometimes sent milk to his private advisers (*Batabazi*) and it was carried to them by a boy and a girl who held office only during their minority. As soon as they were adolescent they were sent off to marry and the office was given to others.

After his midday meal the Mugabe generally went to rest until evening when a large number of chiefs assembled at the royal kraal to talk over general matters and drink beer. During these gatherings the Mugabe sat in a special house where three short posts were arranged so that he might sit between two of them, resting his arms on them, while he leaned against the third. A special wife sat by his side to make another prop for him to lean on if he so desired. In later times, when the idea of chairs with backs instead of stools began to penetrate the country, a low curved wall of reeds was built between the two side posts so that the Mugabe might sit between the posts and lean back against it. He sometimes used a wooden stool to sit upon and in the house

he sometimes sat upon the bed, but as a rule he squatted like an ordinary cow-man.

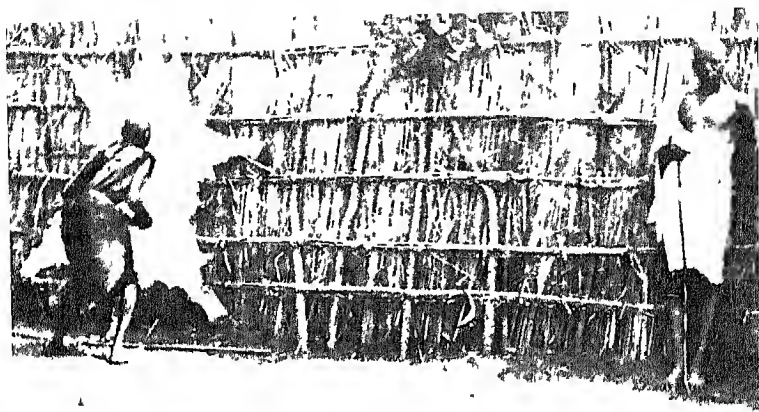
After this evening meeting the Mugabe might have another meal of beef and beer and before going to bed he might drink some of the evening milk. It often happened, however, that he, as well as some of the chiefs, drank so much beer at the meeting that they had to be carried away. The servants who accompanied their masters were responsible for them and had to see them safely deposited in bed. The Mugabe was never said to be drunk; the servants said *Kusinda* (he sighed).

The Mugabe never moved about in his own kraal or elsewhere without some weapon and rarely without a guard, but he seldom lost his temper during the daily gatherings, though he was known sometimes to strike a chief or servant in wrath, whereupon the pages at once put the offender to death. In the evening, however, when he had partaken too freely of beer he often gave way to violent fits of rage, especially when among his wives, and in these he would strike people and break things until he could be got to bed to sleep it off.

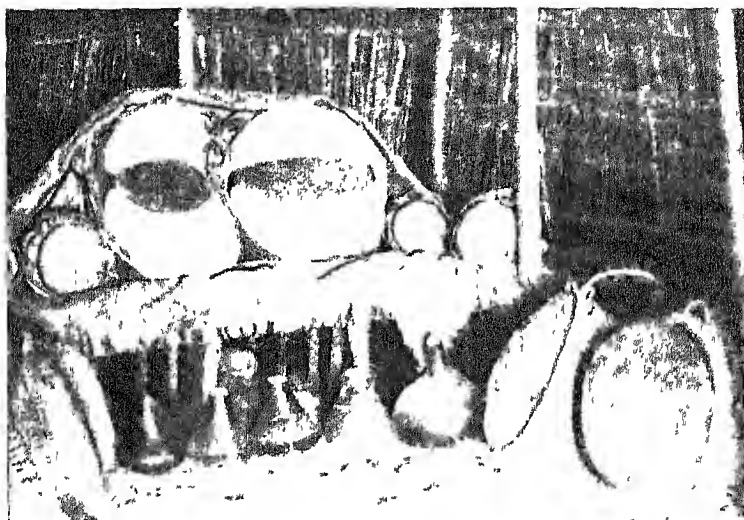
It was never known outside the Mugabe's part of the kraal in what house he intended to sleep. If he felt inclined to do so he made a round of the kraal to see the cattle, and then entered the house of the wife with whom he meant to spend the night. One or two pages followed him and the milk-pots were brought and hung up over the platform on which the wife kept her pots. The wife prepared the bed, in which the Mugabe slept between well-buttered bark-cloths. This secrecy was observed lest the Mugabe might be attacked during the night by anyone who wished to kill him. It was said that there had been cases when a prince killed the Mugabe by night in order to secure the throne.

#### THE ROYAL DRUMS

At a little distance from the royal kraal was a small enclosure in which stood the hut of the royal drums. These were the only drums in the country, for, unlike most African peoples, the Banyankole did not make constant use of drums



Dressing a cow-skin



Sacred drums in their house with offering of milk before them

but got their music from a primitive harp, shaped like a tortoise shell, which was played by women, while the serfs used water-pots containing varying quantities of water, so that they sounded different notes when struck on the mouths with pads attached to sticks two feet long.

At one time these royal drums had their hut on another hill to the north of the River Ruiru, for a stream of water had to flow between them and the Mugabe's residence. When, however, the Mugabe became a Christian, he had the drums brought to his own hill, where a special hut was built for them. Their hut was always domed and might have no point or pinnacle; inside there was a stand or bed (*Emitagara*) on which lay two drums, known as *Bagendenswa* and *Nakasanzha*. These were the chief drums, and they were never beaten except by the Mugabe at his coronation. On the left side of the stand lay *Kabembula*, and beside it a small drum, *Mpulo*, which was beaten by the guardian at each new moon and when the other drums were taken out. The other drums, which lay on the floor, were called *Lusesu*, *Gazo*, *Enzeru*, *Eigulu*, *Mpondi*, *Kikaro* and *Nabahangwi*. At the back of the hut behind the bed lay a quantity of material for repairing these drums, and this had to be carefully guarded for it might not be used for any other purpose. To the left of the hut was a bag, *Ensegu*, in which were the instruments necessary for taking an augury should it be needed, and beside it lay some whistles and an iron rod (*Nalusalu*) upon which the tools for making the drums were sharpened, for this might not be done upon a stone. In front of the bed or stand was a row of milk-pots belonging to the drums, in which the daily offerings of milk were put.

The chief drums were the two which lay upon the bed. These were covered with white skins with a black strip across them, making them look like a pair of great eyes in the gloom of the hut, for they lay on their sides facing the low doorway through which the only light came. A sacred herd of cows yielded a supply of milk which was daily offered to these drums in the pots which stood in front of them. It was placed



there in the morning and remained until nine or ten o'clock, by which time the drum-spirits had taken the essence and the remainder might be drunk by the guardians. The same ceremony was transacted after the evening milking. The guardians of the drums were called *Barurura* and might be chosen from any tribe or clan of the cow-people. There was also a woman, *Mulanga* of the Abarura clan, who was known as the "wife of the drums," and whose duty it was to look after the milk, the churning, and the covering of the drums. Another woman from the Abasinga clan looked after the fire in the drum-house, which had always to be kept burning because the drum-spirits required warmth.

Offerings of cattle or beer were made to the drums by chiefs when a son had been born to them or when they had received promotion to some office or had been successful in some expedition and earned the commendation of the Mugabe. The Mugabe also made an annual offering of cows to the drums, so that they possessed a large herd; those offered to *Bagen-denswa* had to be red or white and those for *Nakasaizha* black. These cows were sacred and the Mugabe alone might order one to be killed; no one but the guardians might eat the meat of an animal thus killed and the skin was kept for repairing the drums. It was from these cows that the milk was taken which was daily offered to the drums, and from the surplus milk butter was made for smearing on them and for other uses connected with them, such as preparing the cow-skins for covering them.

The drums had also their sacred spear, *Nyamiringa*, and a staff, *Karemba*, which were kept in the hut. When a princess was married, the chief guardian of the drums took the spear and stuck it in the ground at the head of the bed upon which the bride was lying. In the morning when he went to fetch the spear, the husband had to give him a cow, for the princess was a daughter of the drums who must therefore receive a marriage gift for her. The staff was also taken to a royal wedding and the bridegroom had to make it a suitable present in cattle.

The man who repaired the drums bore the title *Ebigirema*; he might not make any other drums nor allow any of his materials to be used for other purposes. The cow from which the skin for re-covering a drum was taken was always black, white, or red, according to the drum for which it was required. It was first offered to the drum in the shrine and afterwards killed near the door. The skin was dressed with butter and the worker trod and stamped upon it until it was soft and supple, when it was taken with the drum to the forest Muzari. While still supple with butter, it was moistened with water and stretched on the drum where it shrank while drying. Four sheep were then killed and given as remuneration to the men who assisted in the repairing of the drum.

There was a pad on which each of the drums was carried to the forest, and this was also made from the skin of a black, white, or red cow which had a calf alive and well. The two special drums when on the stand rested on pads made of calf-skin. The calf was first presented to the drums and was then killed near them, and the skin was softened by being stamped upon and treated with butter. The meat of the calf was given to the guardians.

When the drums were being covered with new skins, which was always done at the accession of a new Mugabe, a boy, old enough to herd cows and very fat, was killed, and his blood was caught and mixed with that of a cow. Papyrus specially brought from the river was burned to ashes and these were made into balls with the blood and rubbed upon the drums. Some say that the boy's throat was cut and the blood allowed to flow into the drums. This, however, has not been done for three reigns and it was impossible to discover what actually did happen and what fetishes were concealed in the drums. One or two people expressed the idea that the smearing of the drums with blood, which was done at other times as well as at the coronation, was to remind the people that the Mugabe had power to kill, but this statement was not generally made.

Whenever the drums were moved for any purpose, the chief guardian beat a greeting to them on one of the small

drums and his assistants clapped their hands before them and talked to them to prevent their being annoyed at being moved and thus put to inconvenience. They were never taken into the royal kraal, though the Mugabe might go to them.

Sometimes the guardian of the drums stated to the Mugabe that they required meat, whereupon the Mugabe ordered a cow to be brought from the herd of the drums. It was kept for one night near the house of the drums with other cows, and in the morning it was taken before the drums where the guardian presented it to them, saying, "This is the cow which the Mugabe consents to your having. Now let him live in peace with his neighbours, drive illness away from him and make him powerful!" The cow was then killed, the blood being caught and kept for smearing on the drums.

When the Mugabe intended to go to war, a special ceremony with the drums was enacted. He sent to his chief cow-man for a rope or thong (*mboha*) which had been used for tying the legs of restive cows when being milked, a little hair from the penis-sheath of a bull, and a little clay from the place where a cow had trodden and left the impression of its foot. The Mugabe in person took these offerings to the drums, and was preceded by the royal spear-bearer with the two royal spears, which he stuck in the ground before the drums. The guardian then raised the two drums and the Mugabe placed the things which he had brought underneath them. This was supposed to ensure the safety of the Mugabe and the success of the expedition. On his return the Mugabe made a special offering to the drums of fifteen cows, three of which had to be of the special colours of the drums, black, white and red.

The drums also formed a kind of sanctuary, for, if a man feared that for some reason he was going to be deprived of his property by the Mugabe, he would try to make his way to the drums and, if he reached them, he could not be despoiled. So, too, if a man who was to be put to death succeeded in escaping to the drums, he was safe and became their perpetual servant.

## THE MUGABE'S COWS

The cattle of the Mugabe were distributed over all the country under special herdsmen. They were divided into herds according to their colour, each herd being kept strictly separate from the others so that the bulls of one herd were never able to come to the cows of another.

The Mugabe appointed men to be the herdsmen of his cows, giving each man as a rule a hundred cows and leaving him to choose his own assistants. The chief herdsmen were known by different names according to the colour of their herds, in most cases by a name denoting that colour:

Emamba, black	Engazo, red
Ebisa, white	Ebitare, very pure white
Enchere, yellowish white	Misina, brown
Empogo, black with red	Mayenzi, red with black
Embubi, black and white	Bugondo, red and white
Emiroko, red and white head with patches of white on red body	Emiremba, red legs with white or black body
Enkungu, hornless of any colour	

These men were responsible to the Mugabe only, but the chiefs of the different districts had to keep a general watch over the Mugabe's herds and settle any disputes among herdsmen. The herd from which the special milk for the Mugabe and his household was brought was kept in two kraals just outside the royal kraal, fifty cows being in each. The two herdsmen in charge of this herd were special favourites of the Mugabe, and new men were appointed to these posts at the accession of a new Mugabe, though he might retain the herdsmen appointed to the ordinary herds by his predecessor.

Though private individuals looked upon their herds as their own property, the Mugabe had the right to take cattle from any herd whenever he so desired, even in addition to the regular taxation of the herds.

## CHAPTER V

### RULERS OF ANKOLE. PART II

Illness of the Mugabe—treatment for grey hair—finding the cause of illness by augury—interview with sons and chiefs—the royal poison—announcing the death—mourning—preparing the body—the royal tombs at Esanza—re-birth of the Mugabe as a lion—return of the messengers—mourning—accession—purificatory ceremony—contesting the accession—lighting the fires—accession ceremonies at Ibanda—the new capital—wives of the Mugabe

#### ILLNESS AND DEATH

NO Mugabe ever allowed himself to grow old. he had to put an end to his life before his powers, either mental or physical, began to deteriorate. It was even thought undesirable that the Mugabe should look old, and treatment was applied to prevent his hair from growing grey. A bird, *kinyankwanzi*, was caught and killed, the body being dried and burnt to ashes, which were mixed with butter. This mixture was prepared by the medicine-man, who pronounced some magic incantations over it, and, when the night was darkest before the new moon appeared, the Mugabe smeared his head with it. The bird, *kinyankwanzi*, was sacred and, if any unauthorised person killed one, he was deprived of all his possessions.

When the Mugabe felt unwell, but the illness was not considered serious, he sent a message to the *Nganzi* who then asked the diviner to discover what ghost was the cause of the trouble. This he did by a test with the insect *ntondo* and two sticks, in the manner already described (*v* Religion, Chap. III). When the insect, by climbing towards the second stick, had announced the name of the ancestor whose ghost was the cause, the *Nganzi* returned to inform the Mugabe, who made an offering at the shrine which was sacred to that ghost.

If the Mugabe felt slightly unwell in the morning, he had all his fetishes brought to him and spat upon each of them

before proceeding to his ordinary duties. If, however, he felt seriously ill, he did not appear in public and was said to be *kwesima*, taking rest, for no one dared to say that the Mugabe was ill.

No Mugabe ever went on living when he felt that his powers were failing him through either serious illness or old age. As soon as he felt his strength diminishing he knew it was time to end his life, and he called together his chiefs and also his sons, who never came to see him except on this occasion. At this interview he made no reference to his intentions but talked of affairs of the state. Either then or at some earlier time he nominated the son whom he wished to succeed him as Mugabe.

When all was ready, he summoned the royal medicine-man and asked for the king's poison. This was always kept in readiness in the shell of a crocodile's egg. The white of the egg was dried and powdered and mixed with the dried nerve from the pointed end of an elephant's tusk and some other ingredients, the exact mixture being kept strictly secret. This had only to be mixed with a little water or beer to be ready for use, and when the Mugabe drank it he fell dead in a few moments.

There was no formal announcement of the death, but the inmates of the royal kraal made a noise like the crying of jackals. The news was carried through the country by word of mouth, and the expression used to announce the death was *kulasya*, to return, the word used for the coming back of the cattle to the kraal at night.

All the fires in the royal kraal and in all the kraals of the Mugabe's herds were extinguished as soon as the news of the death reached them, and all goats and dogs in or near any royal kraal were killed, for they were supposed to retain the evil of death. For this reason people, on hearing of the death, at once hurried their animals to some distant place. Every fully-grown bull in the royal herds had its scrotum tied to prevent its mating with the cows. The royal drums were covered and were not seen until the new Mugabe was appointed.

All work ceased in the land and the blades of all weapons had to be wrapped up in grass or fibre; even an axe might not be used for cutting fire-wood, which had to be broken by hand. Every man, woman, and child in the country had the head shaved as a sign of national mourning, and were rubbed with a bunch of the herb they called *mwetengo*, which was considered to possess special powers of removing impurities which, if left, would cause illness and even death. This herb was used for many purificatory purposes. When people ate meat from an animal which had died of some disease, they rubbed some of the leaves of this in water and rinsed their mouths two or three times to remove all danger. Also a man who had been imprisoned, or rather detained in the stocks, rubbed his body over with it after his release to remove any evil influence before he rejoined his family.

Any man who was engaged had to go and marry his bride on the day of the death, or, if she was too far away or too young to be married, he had to send her a belt of the strap he used for binding the legs of restive cows when they were being milked; this she had to wear round her waist as though she had been confined. Should he neglect this precaution he lost his bride; the engagement was at an end, and he had to look for another wife.

Princes and princesses put on bark-cloth garments and did not wear their cow-hide robes or ornaments of any kind.

The chief wife, assisted by the Mugabe's sister, was in charge of the preparations inside the royal kraal, and special men of the Abahangwe clan were called in to arrange the body for removal to its resting-place and to guard it until all was ready. All ornaments were removed from the body and it was washed with water. The legs were bent up into the squatting posture favoured by cow-men. The right arm was placed under the head and the left arm laid on the breast.

A cow, which had to be perfectly white and in good condition and must have one healthy calf, and a white sheep were brought in the evening when the cattle returned from pasture. The cow was milked and a little of the milk was

poured into the dead man's mouth while the rest was kept for use later. Both animals were killed by having their throats cut and the skins were prepared for use by the men of the royal kraal, who first dried them in the sun, then stamped upon them and treated them with butter until they were soft and supple<sup>1</sup>. The blood of the animals was supposed to be allowed to run on the ground but the men of the kraal often caught it and drank it. The preparation of the skins took two days, during which a special hut was built at the edge of the Esanza forest and the body remained in the royal kraal.

The body was laid on the cow-skin, and the sheep-skin, formed into a kind of bag, was placed on the lower part of the stomach. Some small millet (*bulo*) and the remainder of the milk from the cow was put in the sheep-skin and the cow-skin was folded over all and tightly stitched. Another account stated that the millet was put on the dead man's stomach, the milk poured over it, and the sheep-skin laid on the top, after which the body, thus prepared, was wrapped in the cow-skin. The meat of the cow was eaten by the men of the Abahangwe clan who were in charge of the body, while the sheep was given to the servants who helped in the preparations.

The place for royal tombs was on the edge of a forest at Esanza on the Koki side of Ankole, a journey generally of about thirty miles from the royal kraal. Some thirty or forty men of the royal clan set out on the morning of the third day after the death and bore the body to Ibara where they slept one night, killing a bull for food. On the following day they went on to Esanza where the body was handed over to the priests. The messengers waited at the edge of the forest where they built huts. While they were waiting they had the right to help themselves to cattle from any herd, and they lived on milk, beef and beer.

<sup>1</sup> A former account given in *The Northern Bantu* states "In the evening of the second day a large cow is killed and the raw hide is wrapped around the body and stitched together, and the corpse is taken to a sacred forest called Esanza. The ox may not be killed in the ordinary way by having its throat cut, but is thrown down by a number of men who quickly twist its head round and break its neck."



The priests carried the body from the border of the forest to the hut which had been prepared for it. Inside this there was a stand like a bedstead with posts fixed in the ground and side-pieces and cross-pieces resting on them. The body was placed on this bed and the cow-skin was cut open so as to expose it. Under the bedstead was a large wooden vessel to catch any fluids which might come from the body, and the priests and one at least of the men who had come from the royal court remained in the hut day and night. The body was turned daily from one side to the other for a month, or longer if necessary.

As decomposition set in, the body swelled, which was called being pregnant. Later it burst and the juices which dropped into the vessel beneath were kept for further use. A red cow which had her first calf, both cow and calf being in good health, was brought and milked and the milk was mixed with the fluids from the body. The vessel with this mixture was placed on the bed, and again the guards kept watch until the mixture became a mass of grubs.

The priest then selected a large grub which he declared to be the Mugabe re-born. He took it into the forest and shortly returned with a lion cub into which he affirmed the grub had turned and which was, therefore, the Mugabe in a new condition. A white bull was killed and the blood given to the cub to drink, and the men who had brought the body waited to see that it was healthy and thriving. When the next new moon appeared the messengers set out to return to the capital and announce the re-birth of the Mugabe.

The disposal of the body of the late Mugabe was a point of little importance. Some said that it was buried in the forest and no further notice taken of it, while others asserted that it was simply left on the bed in the hut which, being uncared for, soon fell down. The lion cub, however, was tended until it was old enough to run wild, when it was turned into the forest.

Each year the Mugabe sent two cows for milk and two for meat to the spirit of his father. The two for meat were taken

and killed in the forest for food for the lion and the milk from the others was used by the priests. The messengers who took the animals to the forest were rewarded on their return with a cow.

Until the messengers who had taken the body to the forest returned to the capital there was no mourning, though no work was done and no weapons were used. All the people in the royal kraal, having shaved their heads and rubbed the purificatory herb *mwetengo* over their bodies to remove the evil of death, then quietly awaited the news of the re-birth. The Mugabe's widows took off all their ornaments and gave them away. Some of them strangled themselves when they heard of the death, others who had children left the royal kraal and went to live with their sons or daughters, while young widows generally remained to become the wives of the new Mugabe.

When the messengers arrived with the news of the re-birth of the Mugabe, mourning began and the people raised cries as of jackals and hyaenas which continued all that night. The people in the royal kraal had their heads shaved again and rubbed over with the herb *mwetengo*. The water they had used was then thrown away on some waste land where no one was likely to pass over it.

#### ACCESSION

Next morning a boy was chosen whose parents were both living and well and who was himself in good health. He went to the royal well where he drew water and filled either a wooden vessel like a beer-trough or a clay trough such as was used for watering cows. The Mugabe's cattle were brought before the royal kraal and the princes and princesses and crowds of people assembled there.

At cock-crow the prince who had been nominated by the Mugabe as his successor was brought forward and given the dead Mugabe's shoes. The Mugabe's stool, which was a solid block of wood carved roughly into the shape of a stool, was placed on the royal mat, and the prince sat upon it while the

late Mugabe's brother, or, according to some accounts, the *Nganzi*, proclaimed him as the chosen ruler. According to one account, the *Nganzi* then lectured the new Mugabe on his duties, after which each of the principal chiefs admonished him and praised the dead ruler. The Mugabe, meanwhile, said nothing but stared steadily on the ground, and all the other princes kept silence.

The Mugabe's stool was placed near the vessel of water which had been brought from the royal well and in which white clay had been mixed. A chosen sister of the new Mugabe then approached and was given two bunches of the sacred herbs, *nyawera*, *ehoza*, *muliera*, *omugorora* and *mulokola*. Dipping these in the water, she sprinkled first the new Mugabe, touching him on the knees, shoulders and forehead, then the royal family and the people and cattle; lastly, she sprinkled the liquid towards the four quarters of the earth to purify the land. Herds which were at a distance were purified by a special messenger who was sent round the country with the herbs and some of the water. All vessels belonging to the late Mugabe were also brought out and purified after any that had flaws in them or were decorated with wire had been destroyed. When the work of purification had been done, the princess claimed a certain portion of the royal herds as her own.

According to some accounts the Mugabe then rose and sprinkled the people and land, and, if any prince desired to contest the accession, he also rose and did the same before departing to raise an army and fight for the throne.

The guardians of the royal spears, stool, shoes, drums, drum-sticks, fetishes, and tobacco pipes then brought these things to the new Mugabe for him to touch, and the Mugabe rose and, uncovering the royal drums, tapped a few beats on them, and declared himself to be the eldest son and the legal heir. He then dismissed the people, promising to rule wisely and agreeing to all that the chiefs had said to him. He again declared himself Mugabe and told the other princes to submit to his rule.

If the princes did not intend to contest the accession, they departed to their homes and returned in a few days to do homage, bringing with them presents of cows. Should any of them, however, wish to fight, they departed and raised an army and civil war was proclaimed. When one prince decided to fight, the others either joined one of the contending parties or took advantage of the state of affairs to raise an army themselves and try to gain the throne. The prince who had been proclaimed Mugabe did not go to war in person but sent his representative, and the war went on until only one of the claimants was left alive. Should a rebellious prince succeed in killing his opponents, including the prince who was on the throne, he appointed his favourite sister to the office of Mugabe's sister in place of the sister formerly appointed, but it was not necessary to repeat the purification ceremony and he went on to the further ceremonies of accession.

When the fighting was over and the Mugabe established on his throne, his first task was to order the fires in all the royal kraals to be re-lit. This was done with fire brought by men of the Abaitira clan and not with fire-sticks.

Up to this time the residence of the new Mugabe had been in his father's kraal in the old capital, but he now left it and took a journey to Ibanda to a place Kizongo on the river Kigabiro. In this river there was a pool in which the Mugabe was bathed by a man of the clan Abayirunto. On coming out of the water he was smeared over with white clay and a woman, *Nabuzana*, handed him a fetish, *Omwambo*, which was decorated with beads, cowry-shells and wild plantain seeds, and covered with a strip of bark-cloth which was twisted round it. A band of cow-hide on which were stitched beads, cowry-shells and plantain seeds, was placed on his head and a spear and staff such as herdsmen carried were handed to him. The staff was made from the sacred tree *kirikiti*, or, as they called it, *Murnzi*. On his shoulders was put the dress of a herdsman, a skin taken from a young bull, and he was then taken to a small kraal named *Bwakahaya*, where a white

barren cow, two white cows in milk, and a white sheep awaited him. He milked the two cows, which afterwards returned with him to the capital, while the other cow and the sheep were killed and the meat eaten by the guardians of this kraal.

The Mugabe was then taken to a large stone, *Kilura*, on an adjoining hill where the diviner killed a cow and took the augury to discover where the new capital should be built. They went to the indicated site where a temporary dwelling was prepared for the Mugabe until his permanent kraal could be made ready. On their arrival the servants brought a staff and a pot of white clay with which the forehead of the Mugabe was smeared. The royal drums were brought and smeared with the clay and the Mugabe beat them and was again proclaimed ruler. A chief was chosen and sent throughout the country bearing a drum to proclaim the new Mugabe.

The Mugabe then appointed his mother and sister to their offices and chose his new chiefs and the headmen over his cows. He generally appointed new chiefs to all the principal chieftainships, but retained the former chiefs as his advisers. All the chiefs came to do him homage and bring presents.

It was usual for the cow-people to begin married life at an early age so that a prince when he came to the throne was probably already in possession of two or three wives, for he might take any girl he desired, simply sending his messengers to bring her to him. As they brought her they took cows from anyone to feed her and the prince later sent her parents a number of cows to compensate them for the loss of the usual marriage-fee, and, if the girl was already betrothed, he also sent a gift to the man.

When a prince came to the throne he selected one or more of his wives to be favourites, but this did not give their children the prior right to the throne, for any prince might fight for it. The Mugabe might marry women from either Basambo or Bagahc clans and he might take his own sisters to wife, though such alliances were not recognised and he never married the sister whom he appointed to the office of Mugabe's sister.

## CHAPTER VI

### THE MUGABE'S MOTHER AND SISTER

The Mugabe's mother—her power—illness—drinking the royal poison—preparing the body—tomb at Kabigirira—re-birth as a leopard—coming of the heir—the Mugabe's sister—her marriage—rights of her children—illness and death—tomb at Kabanginya—re-birth as a python—sister of Ntare—death of princes and princesses

#### THE MUGABE'S MOTHER

WHEN a new Mugabe was established on his throne, he at once raised his mother to the rank of Mugabe's mother. She had her kraal at a little distance from the royal kraal and over her own estates and among her own people she had supreme power and appointed her own friends and relatives to be her chiefs. The Mugabe visited her when he would, and she might visit him at any time.

When the Mugabe's mother fell ill, she was tended by some of her maids, but, should the illness prove serious, the Mugabe was sent for and came to see her, bringing with him the royal medicine-man. The Mugabe alone went in to see the patient, and, should he consider the illness serious, he communicated with the medicine-man, who mixed the royal poison and gave it to him. He handed this to his mother, who drank it and died at once.

The maids in attendance washed the body and prepared it for burial like that of the king, except that the left arm and not the right was placed under her head and the body was wrapped in bark-cloths before being stitched in the cow-skin. A white cow in perfect condition, with its first calf, was brought from her herds and killed by having its throat cut. The servants prepared the skin, making it quite soft, and the body, wrapped in bark-cloths, was laid on it and stitched up tightly.

During the night the inmates of the kraal kept up a constant howling as of hyaenas, and early next morning the body was conveyed to the forest Kabigirira, near Esanza, where a hut with a bed was prepared as for the Mugabe. The messengers waited while the special priests turned the body from side to side, as in the case of the Mugabe, until the stomach burst, when the fluids were caught and mixed with milk. The pot with the mixture was kept until it became full of grubs when one of them was taken into the forest and was said to become a leopard. The messengers who had taken the body returned home with the information that the Mugabe's mother had become a leopard, after which the women wailed for another night.

In the morning her successor was selected by the Mugabe from the same clan and she inherited the title with all her predecessor's cattle, goods, and estates. The Mugabe and his sister went to purify her, after which she purified the Mugabe and churned in her house to ensure a plentiful supply of butter.

As in the case of the Mugabe, all the full grown bulls of the herds had their scrotums tied during the mourning and were then killed, new bulls being introduced into the herds.

### THE MUGABE'S SISTER

The sister who was chosen by the Mugabe to purify him on his accession became an important person, for she was regarded as responsible for his welfare. She took the title of *Munyanya Mukama* and was given estates in which her power was absolute. She was not queen but was the most important woman in the country. Her kraal was built near that of the Mugabe and she kept always in close touch with him.

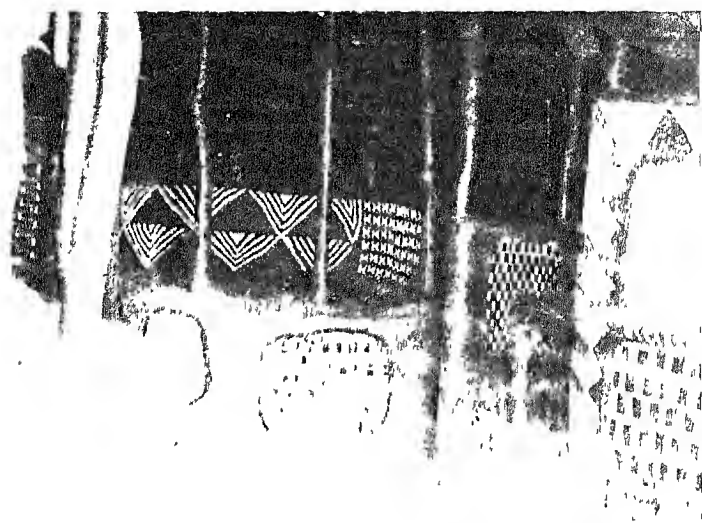
The regulations for the marriage of the Mugabe's sister differed from those followed in the other pastoral tribes where princesses were not allowed to marry any but their half-brothers. The Mugabe's sister married anyone she wished,



Sister of the king (Mugabe) with her husband and child



PLATE VII



Decorations on the walls of a princess's house

and, though the Mugabe might exert his influence to get her to marry a man of his choice, she was quite at liberty to refuse. For some generations it has been the custom for this lady to marry a prince from one of the neighbouring countries, who thereupon came to live with her in Ankole. Before this became usual, she, like other princesses, married some important chief of her own country. The custom of marrying a prince from another country was extraordinary considering the deadly enmity that prevailed between the rulers of neighbouring lands, and there seems to be some confusion as to the law of inheritance with regard to the children of such a marriage.

If the wife died before her husband, he evidently returned to his own country, but he might only take with him the cattle which he possessed in his own right and none that had belonged to his wife. If there were children, they took a portion of the property of their mother, but most of it went to the princess who was appointed by the Mugabe to succeed her and who was regarded as her heir. The sons of such a marriage, however, were said to belong to the father, and, if they inherited property from him, they went to his country, whereas, if they inherited property from their mother, they could not take it out of her country.

When the Mugabe's sister fell ill, she was treated in the ordinary manner and was never given the royal poison. If she died her body was wrapped in bark-cloths and carried to Kabangiginya, part of the royal burial-ground at Esanza, where the same rites were enacted as in the case of the king, and she was said to be re-born in the form of a python which lived in the royal forest. The messengers returned and informed her people and they mourned until the Mugabe sent her heir, when the mourning ceased. If the dead princess had a child, this child purified the sister who was chosen to be the heir, if not another sister performed the office.

When the Mugabe died, the principal sister might strangle herself, or she might retire into private life. The sister of the Mugabe Ntare married a prince of Mpororo. When Ntare

died this sister gathered some twenty of his wives and told them to go into a hut. She then broke the drum and spear of her brother, and, joining the women in the hut, told them to hang themselves, after which she did the same. No one objected as it was looked upon as the right thing to do.

Princes and princesses were also treated at death with a certain amount of ceremonial observance, and purificatory rites were performed. They were buried in the royal forest and were supposed to be re-born in the form of pythons.

## CHAPTER VII

### PASTORAL LIFE

Nomadic life of herdsmen—the kraals—houses—fires—the day's work—the fetish *Amaleka*—milking—herding and watering cows—the calves—cleaning the kraal—drawing water—cleaning milk-pots—churning—butter and butter-milk—uses of urine—milk regulations—cows of the ghosts—eating beef—women and milk—taboos on milk—domestic animals—sheep and goats—fowls—dogs—clothing—hair—slaves—currency—counting—seasons and time—the stars—music and dancing—salutations

THE cow-men paid little attention to districts or their boundaries when grazing cattle, for they regarded all the land as free to the herds though it was forbidden to trespass on land which had been granted to any member of the agricultural class for cultivation. Anyone, too, might burn off grass in any place, and this was regularly done twice a year, in January, when the millet was ripe, and again in June. Herdsmen were nomadic, wandering over the country with the cows as they thought best for themselves and for the health of the animals. When they found a favourable place, they made a rough zareba, known as a *kivaro*, which had three or four grass huts built in the fence at some distance from each other. To this centre the cattle returned each night, and here the herdsmen remained until the pasturage for several miles round was exhausted. A new centre was then chosen and the men built the fence and their shelters anew. In the dry season they would probably remain only a few weeks in one place, but during the rains, when grass was more abundant, they built better huts and remained in one place somewhat longer. The number of cows to be found in one of these kraals was generally one hundred, so that the common name for a herd was *egana* or hundred. One bull, that is, one full-grown animal in good condition, was allowed to each herd of one hundred.

Chiefs and wealthy men seldom if ever wandered about the country with the cows. They built themselves permanent dwellings in kraals near the capital or in their districts and divided their cattle into herds of one hundred, putting a herdsman over each with men under him. These herdsmen were pastoral men, for no member of the agricultural classes was ever employed where the cows were concerned. Sometimes a kraal would be formed by several poorer cow-men who would unite their cows into one herd and share the work of the kraal, for it was impossible for one man, even if he had only a few cows, to herd them, keep his kraal clean, look after the calves, and do the many other things necessary. Two or three men would therefore combine and arrange the work of the kraal as did the herdsmen of the larger herds, taking it in turns to go out to pasture the cows or to stay at home to look after the kraal and the calves. It was also necessary for some to be on the alert at night in case of an attack by wild animals, so that at least four or five herdsmen were required for a herd of one hundred cows.

As a kraal was generally only a temporary habitation, little attention was paid to comfort, the most important part of the erection being the fence, which had to be fairly strong as a protection against wild beasts. The kraal was nearly round in shape, huts being built at intervals and the spaces between them filled with branches or thorny bushes. The kraal might face in any direction, but if it was on the side of a hill, the gate would be made on the higher side, facing up the hill.

The huts were built with their doorways facing inwards to the centre of the kraal, and that of the chief herdsman was always on the far side directly opposite the gate and facing towards it. The huts were bee-hive in shape and were built with no regard for comfort, the sole aim being to get protection from the weather with as little trouble in building as possible. Slender trees or strong branches were fixed in the ground to form a circle of the required diameter, leaving a space for the doorway, and the tops of these were bent inwards and tied together to form the apex. Over this frame-

work of stout ribs and at right angles to them were secured reeds or coarse grass stems, and on the top of these was laid a grass thatch. Inside the hut of the ordinary hired herdsman there was seldom any attempt at furniture, for a man simply laid his cow-skin rug, if he had one, on the ground and slept there without covering. There were no doors, for the men had to be able to see the cows and to rush out to their help in case of danger.

The chief man in the kraal generally had a better hut but the principle of building was the same and the poorest materials were used, timber being always difficult to obtain. His hut was bigger than the others and inside, especially if the kraal was to be in use for some time, platforms of earth were built for beds to raise the person above the floor-level. The owner's bed was about a foot high and four feet wide by eight long, grass was spread upon it and the man slept upon a cow-skin laid over the grass, covering himself with bark-cloths. Near his bed was a light reed screen behind which his daughters slept. Next this, a little further round in the hut, was the sacred spot, a platform about a foot high and four feet wide by six long; this was covered with grass and on it the milk-pots and fetishes were kept. Beyond this again was the sleeping place for the sons, who might either sleep on the floor or have a platform like the parents, and at the foot of their place was the fire. The head of such a house generally sat on the floor about the middle of his bed, while his wife sat on his right near the opening to the daughters' quarters. The children sat on the other side of the hut and visitors near the doorway.

Near the principal hut was the dung-heap, *Lubungo*, on which the refuse of the kraal was daily swept. In the centre of the kraal was the great fire, *nkomi*, which might never die out unless the owner of the kraal died. The fuel used for it was dried cow-dung, and, when a blaze was wanted, grass from the calves' huts was thrown on it. Grass fires were lit at different places in the kraal when the cows were to be milked, both to give light to the milkmen and to keep flies from

tormenting the cows. When the men went to a new kraal, fire from this central fire was carried to the new place to light the central fire there.

By the doorways of certain of the huts were small huts for the calves, in which they were secured by night both for their protection and to prevent their taking all the milk from their dams. These calf-huts had to be swept out daily and fresh grass put in, the old grass being used for burning on the fires. The cows had no shelter but spent the night in the open in the kraal.

There did not seem to be much ritual connected with the building of one of these kraals, but, when they entered a new one, the headman milked a cow that had had two calves, both of which were alive and well. He drank milk from this cow before anyone else might drink any milk in the kraal. This was *Ya kuza omusozo*, "to give luck," like that of the cow from which the milk was taken. On the night when he entered his new house, the owner had to have sexual intercourse with his wife.

A day's routine in a kraal began with the first signs of dawn. It was customary to keep fowls in a kraal, for the men trusted to the cock to wake them at daybreak. At cock-crow the fire in the centre was stirred up and grass thrown on it, while other fires were lit at different points in the kraal. The cows were brought up to these fires and were taught to stand near them ready for the milkmen.

While the men were thus preparing for the milking, some of the women set to work to churn, while others cleaned any milk-pots that had not been cleaned the night before. The wife of each man who had cows then placed her pots in rows inside the door of the hut and with them a fetish, *Amaleka*, which usually lay with them on the milk platform. This fetish was made by an elderly medicine-woman and was composed of a little hair from each cow in the herd, mixed with certain herbs and cow-dung and made into a ball. It was often enclosed in a bark-cloth or cow-skin cover to preserve it from damage, for it was in daily use.

The owner of the cows or the man in charge of the herd usually squatted near the door of his hut to watch the milking. Each cow was brought in turn up to the fire and a boy or assistant allowed its calf to suck a little until the milk flowed freely. The calf was then pulled away and held in front of the cow while the milkman milked as much as he thought desirable. The cow was turned out of the kraal to graze by the gate with its calf, while another was brought and milked. Each pot as it was filled was handed to the wife who held it over the fetish for a moment and then put it amongst the others ready for distribution when the milking was done. As a rule each cow had a separate pot, but if there were two cows both giving little milk, one pot might be used for the two. As long as these milk-pots were standing in the doorway of the hut, it was a sacred place.

When the milking was done, the milk was distributed to the family and the members of the kraal. Those men who were going out with the cattle drank as much as they could at once, for it was their only meal until night. Those who were to be working in the kraal might reserve some to be drunk later, when they had finished the heavy work of cleaning up the place, and the children's milk might be kept for them during the day, but no one ever drank milk from the morning milking after four in the afternoon. Any that was left then was either put into the churn or given to the dogs. In the evening as a rule the milk was drunk immediately after the milking.

The men of the kraal took turns in taking the cows to pasture and those left at home had many tasks to perform in the kraal. Three men, or two men and one boy, were generally needed to go out with a herd of one hundred cows and by seven o'clock they would be ready to start. The calves were then separated from their dams and the cows were driven away, grazing as they went. The men in charge followed the cattle about, directing them by word of mouth and keeping guard over them lest any wild beast should attack them. The cows wandered sometimes as far as twenty



miles in a day and during the dry season they had to be watered twice a day, usually between nine and ten in the morning and again between three and five in the afternoon. In the rainy season, however, it was only necessary to water them in the afternoon, as the moisture in the grass was sufficient for their needs. The cows were trained to obey an order and the watering of a large herd showed the wonderful control the men had over them. Sometimes it was possible for the cows to go down to the water and drink, but at other times the water had to be drawn from deep wells and poured into troughs which were dug some twelve feet long and eighteen inches wide and deep and lined with clay. This work was done by the men who were left in the kraal and the troughs were ready for the cows when they arrived. A certain number were allowed to go at a time to drink while the rest had to wait until their turn came. They were so accustomed to being called by name and to obeying orders that they waited patiently until they were told to come and drink.

If a bull fell into a well while drinking, it might not mate with cows again, but had to be killed.

About half-past six, as the sun set, the cows were brought back into the kraal for the night and were milked again. After the evening milking they remained in the kraal and got neither food nor water during the night. At no time did they get artificial food and no attempt was made to improve the milk supply. If the pasturage happened to be poor, the cows had to suffer. There were, however, certain seasons of the year when cattle-flies were especially troublesome and so irritated the animals that they could not feed during the day; at such times the herdsmen would take them out to pasture for two or three hours during the night.

When the cows went off in the morning to the pasture, the calves were either driven back into the kraal or remained outside in charge of special men or of women or children. The calves, while still young, were only allowed to go out for an hour or two in the morning and again in the late afternoon when the sun was not hot, but the older calves went out for

longer periods. As a rule these were looked after by children, but, if there were no children in the kraal, the work might be done by women or by some of the men.

The first task of the men who were left in the kraal was to sweep up the droppings made by the cows during the night and tidy the place. The sweeping was done with the soles of the feet and with the hands, and when they had finished they washed their hands and feet with water. Herdsmen did not usually bathe with water, as it was supposed to have an injurious effect on the milk. It was therefore more usual to smear the body over with moist white clay, which was allowed to dry and was then rubbed off and butter rubbed on. Before milking for the Mugabe, however, the men washed their hands with water, or preferably with cows' urine.

The dung which was swept up was put on the heap at one side of the kraal while some was dried and heaped upon the central fire. The huts of the calves had also to be swept out and the old grass collected for future use as fuel while new grass was brought and spread. Fire-wood had also to be brought in for the fires in the huts, which were kept burning constantly and were not allowed to go out during the night. Some of the men had to carry milk and butter to the owner of the herd if he was at a distance from the kraal. Then, if the water had to be drawn from wells or pits for the cows, some of the men had to go and dig the troughs and fill them and also to bring water for washing the milk-vessels.

A pastoral woman might never go to draw water, for, if she fell into the water, her husband might never treat her as his wife again. If he did so he would die, unless he belonged to the Abasambo clan, when he might send for a doctor to give her medicine to cause sickness, after which she might go to him again.

If the wife of a cow-man fell from her husband's bed, she might not return to him until she had been given medicine to make her sick.

The work of the women in a kraal was to look after the milk, the milk-pots, and the churning, but, if there were no

women, this had to be done by some of the men or boys. After the milk had been drunk in the morning, the pots were handed back to the woman in charge who, with her maids, washed them, using generally water and a little earth. If any pot was thought to be sour, urine from a cow was boiled and the pot was washed out with this and afterwards with water. Grass was sometimes burned in the pots to sweeten them. The clean pots were put in the sun to dry and were then fumigated over a little pottery furnace in which a special kind of scented grass was burned. The milk-pot was inverted over the chimney of this furnace and the smoke fanned into it, which gave the milk a flavour much appreciated by the cow-people. The pots when dried and ready were all returned to their place in the hut until the time of the evening milking, after which they were merely washed out with water and replaced on their stand, ready for the morning.

Churning was done in the early morning before the heat of the day. A large bottle-necked gourd which was used as a churn (*kisabo*) stood beside the milk-pots and each day the wife poured what milk she could spare into this. When it was ready for churning, the neck of the gourd was plugged with a tuft of grass, and the person churning, generally a daughter or a servant, rocked it to and fro on her lap until the butter separated. The liquid was filtered through spear-grass (*mutete*) to secure all the butter, which was put on a large wooden plate, *kiteraterero*, big enough for the worker to wash it and work it up with the hand to cleanse it from the remains of the milk. It was then put into the vessel (*ensimbo*) in which it was kept.

Butter was used for smearing upon the body and for rubbing into skins and bark-cloths used for clothing, to keep them soft. When used for food, the butter was mixed with salt, and the meat, plantain, or millet-porridge was dipped into it. Butter was also largely used for barter, and weapons and other commodities were purchased with it.

The butter-milk was generally drunk by women and children, for few men, and those only of the lower class, would



Milk-pots and gourd churn, a set for one family



Milkman carrying milk

drink it. Any that could be spared was given to the dogs. Men, however, were fond of clotted milk, which was prepared by pouring milk into a vessel called *kirera* in which a little sour milk had been left. This caused the milk which had been poured in to turn sour very quickly and it became clotted. Before being drunk it was stirred up and the clots broken.

Cows' urine was used for many different purposes. Women drank it mixed with certain herbs as a medicine during pregnancy and also used it for cleaning any milk vessels that were thought to be sour. Cow-skin garments were washed in it to keep them free from vermin, and butter was rubbed on them afterwards to soften them. The people also used it to wash their heads, rinsing them afterwards in fresh water to get rid of the smell and to prevent the urine from getting into the eyes and making them smart.

The staple food of a cow-man was milk, but there were occasions when to drink milk would be harmful to the cows and he had therefore to refrain. If a cow died either from illness or accident, the men of the kraal would eat the meat and drink beer that night, leaving the milk for the women and children and for churning. A man had to allow time for the meat to digest and pass from the upper part of the stomach before he drank milk again, lest this should come in contact with the meat; if, therefore, he ate meat at night he would not drink milk until after the morning milking. Sometimes, too, when milk was scarce, some members of the family would take millet or plantain porridge in the evening and drink no milk until morning. Even the Mugabe, who was allowed many liberties not permitted to ordinary men, was not allowed to drink milk and eat meat at the same meal.

It was a wife's duty to see that the milk was properly distributed after each milking. Certain of the cows were dedicated to ghosts and the milk from these had always to be kept separate from the ordinary milk. The ghost of the former owner of the herd had always his special cow or cows

in milk and the vessels containing the milk from them were placed on a particular spot behind the present owner's bed for a time, after which the owner and his children alone might drink it. Even the wife might not partake, for she was of a different clan from her husband and the ghost. There were many other occasions on which the milk from certain cows was taboo to certain people and the wife had to see that such milk was kept separate and given to the right persons. She kept separate pots for these special purposes and after the milking was done, distributed the milk to members of the family and to the herdsman. Some of the milk was drunk at once by the men, while other members of the family and the owner would often set some aside to be drunk later.

A sick man was permitted to drink milk, but as a rule one cow would be set aside to supply him and he would not be allowed to drink milk from any other until he was well again. Though milk might not be boiled, hot water might be added to it when it was to be used for a sick man. If a man ate potatoes or beans, he had not only to fast twelve hours but had also to take a purgative to ensure that all contaminating matter had left his system before he drank milk again.

Though children were allowed to eat hares, the only meat a herdsman might eat was that of cows or buffaloes, but these he might eat even from an animal which had died of some disease. If there was any doubt about the meat being fit for human consumption, the man drank or rinsed out his mouth with water and certain herbs (*mwetengo* or *muhukya*), a precaution which was considered sufficient to remove all danger and to render even loathsome meat wholesome.

Milk was never sold and was as a rule given only to pastoral people to drink. It might never be put into any iron vessel, nor boiled, nor put into hot water, for this would have a deleterious effect on the cows and might cause the milk to cease, thus depriving the people and the calves of their food.

Women lived as much as possible on milk, but there were many taboos which they had to observe. A wife might never drink milk from cows which were sacred to her husband's

ancestors, for of this only the husband and his children might partake; the wife, being of a different clan, was forbidden to do so. A woman while menstruating might not drink milk for four days, for, if she did so, the cow's udder would swell and its milk cease, and the animal might become barren. If, however, her husband or father could supply her with milk from a cow which was past bearing, she might safely drink that. A wife continued to sleep with her husband and to look after the milk-pots and churn while menstruating, and there was no idea of danger to anything but the cows. The wife of a herdsman might not touch butter or butter-pots from ten in the morning until four in the afternoon, for, if she did so, the cows would bear bull-calves only.

When a cow had been with the bull, the milk was taboo to all grown men and women for four days and was drunk by boys and girls. When a cow had a calf, the calf was allowed to drink all the milk from its dam at two or three milkings after its birth, after that, the milk had to be drunk by a small boy or girl, preferably the son or daughter of the owner, until the navel cord fell from the calf, when the milk became common. When a cow bore twins, only the owner and any unmarried children who might be living at home might drink the milk, and, if the cow bore twins a second time, the milk was given away to strangers, which was supposed to prevent the cow from bearing a third set of twins.

A cow which was sacred to the ghost of the owner's father might never be milked by a son of the owner. The man who milked it brought the milk-pot to the owner, who placed it by the bed on the side furthest from the fire. When it had been there some three hours, the owner and any unmarried children who lived at home drank it. The only other person who might partake was a friend or relative of the owner who had spent the night with him and slept on the same bed. When such a cow died, only the owner and members of his household might eat the meat.

Milk was never used as a sign of any pledge or of the ending of any quarrel: this was always done over beer.



## DOMESTIC ANIMALS

In addition to the large herds of cattle which were the most important factor in their lives, the pastoral people possessed goats and sheep, which they gave to the agricultural people to look after for them. A few sheep were sometimes kept in the kraal and herded with the cows, for a ghost might, through a medicine-man, demand that a sheep be kept in the herd to ensure to both man and beast immunity from illness. This animal was not sacred and when it died anyone might eat the flesh and another was brought to take its place. Most of the sheep, however, were cared for by the peasants, and goats were never kept in the kraals.

Sheep were widely used among the pastoral people on ceremonial occasions such as marriages and funerals, and both sheep and goats were used for sacrificial purposes and for the taking of auguries in cases of illness and trouble. When a ghost had to be exorcised, a goat or a sheep was usually again required either to sacrifice, alive or dead, to the ghost, or to pay the medicine-man, and they were also used for barter and for making small presents to friends or visitors when the owner did not wish to part with a cow or a calf.

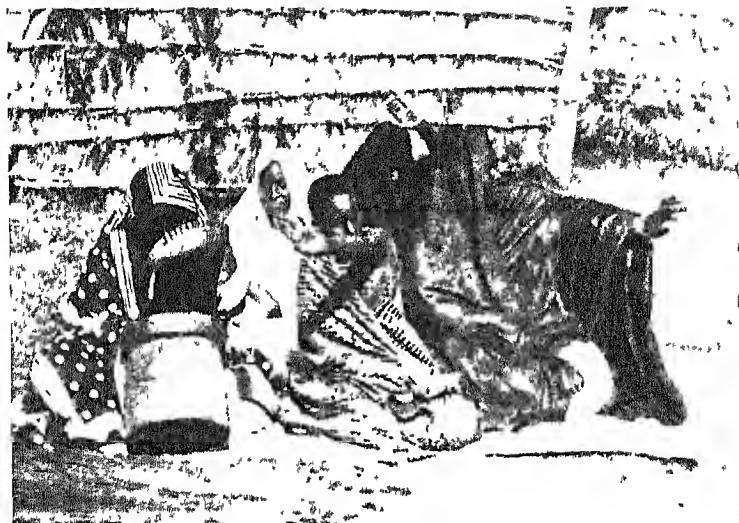
Fowls were kept in the kraal because a cock was needed to warn the inmates in the morning when it was time to arise and prepare to milk the cows; they were also often demanded by medicine-men for the purpose of auguries. Pastoral people, however, never ate either fowls or eggs and they never sold fowls, though they might give them away.

A fowl over which some incantations had been pronounced was often killed and hung over the door of a hut to ward off some evil, or it might be buried alive in the doorway or near the bed for the same purpose. If a woman was heard to imitate the crowing of a cock, her husband divorced her and no man would marry her.

Some dogs were kept in the kraal, for they were useful as scavengers and cleared up any food, bones, and so forth left about the kraal by the children. Even the Mugabe kept a few favourite dogs always near him, but the majority were



Peasant girl with hair cut in ridges



Fat women who sit to dance  
The performance is with the arms and upper part of the body

looked after by the peasants and were used for hunting. They were kindly treated and never driven away, but their food was scanty, though any milk that was left over and was not required for churning was given to them.

When a dog had puppies, a cow was bled and the dog was given blood to drink in addition to milk, and offal was given to it for food. Puppies, if not wanted, might not be destroyed before their eyes were open. Dogs were never sold but might be given away to friends. Should a woman kill a dog, her husband divorced her at once and no man would marry her, for she might never again cook for any man.

When the Mugabe died, the dogs and goats found in the vicinity of any royal kraal were killed; when the news of the death was heard, people who wished to save their animals had to send them away to a distance before the search parties could find them.

### CLOTHING

Children of both sexes went entirely naked until they reached the age of puberty. At this age a boy was presented by his father with a bow and a quiver of arrows and he began to wear the full dress of a man, which consisted only of a small cow- or calf-skin (*engynsho*) over the shoulders, and sometimes a skin-apron (*entuiga*). These skins were shaped and fringed according to the owner's fancy, and princes and chiefs often had their shoulder capes made up of strips of cow-, leopard- and antelope-skins, or of cow-skins of different colours. The hair was left on the skins, which were stitched together with sinews of animals, usually of cows. It was more usual, however, to use the leopard- and antelope-skins for rugs than for clothing.

Girls at the age of eight or nine began to wear on the head a kind of grass veil like a mat (*enyagamo*) some two feet square, made of lengths of straw stitched side by side. When a girl reached marriageable age, she wore the full dress of a woman, which consisted of a large robe of skins wrapped round the body under the arms and secured with a belt, and another large cow-skin or sometimes a bark-cloth covering

her head and falling to her feet, often trailing a yard or more on the ground. The whole person was thus covered, only the eyes being visible through a small opening left so that the woman could see.

The wives of the Mugabe and princesses usually had their robes made of different coloured skins dressed with the hair on and then cut into strips some four inches wide and stitched together, the effect of black, white, and red strips being much admired.

It was only in the presence of her husband, her father, and her brothers that a woman might go without the head-covering. She might sleep with a friend of her husband, but must cover her head and might never allow her face to be seen by him in the open.

The cow-men often dressed the skins for clothes themselves, but the agricultural people were the recognised skin-dressers.

Ornaments were worn and admired by both sexes. Boys and men wore bracelets and sometimes necklets, made generally from the stiff hairs of elephants' tails, though the necklets were regarded as more particularly a woman's ornament. A girl wore no ornaments until she was to be married, when her father presented her with some. The ornaments of women were necklets (*eludungu*), anklets (*en-verere*), and bracelets (*olugaga*) and were usually made of fine twisted wire, though some were of solid iron or brass.

### HAIR

The hair of the pastoral people was not in tightly curled tufts like that of the negroes, but it was always wavy and never straight. It was usual to shave the head once a month, but all the hair was not shaved off. A man whose father was alive left one tuft like a bit of pencil as a sign that he was living, and one for the Mugabe, and sometimes one for his own children. If the Mugabe, or the man's father, or one of his children died, one tuft was shaved off. These were not always the same tufts, for each time the head was shaved, the old tufts were taken off and new tufts left.

A girl's or woman's head was shaved in patterns, sometimes in broad lines from ear to ear, sometimes in a spiral with a circular patch on the top. New patches, which were called *kikara*, were left each time and the old taken off. A patch was always left on the top for her husband or, if she was unmarried, for her father, and one on the side for the Mugabe. If the husband or father, or the Mugabe died, the corresponding patch was shaved off. When a woman grew old and white hairs appeared, she wore a wig, made from her own hair which she had saved for this purpose, to hide them.

There was no rule about hair being shaved by any special person, but, when a girl was about to be married, her mother shaved the hair from all parts of her body and cut her nails and threw the clippings on the floor of the hut. From the time of marriage both men and women shaved all the hair from their bodies, leaving none but the head patches.

There was not so much fear of hair falling into the hands of evilly disposed persons as in some parts of the country, but it was generally put into some part of a field or on some waste ground, or a man might have it concealed in the roof of his hut, but, if he left the place, he did not trouble to remove it. The hair and nail-parings of the Mugabe were preserved until he died, when they were put in his grave.

A woman who grew a beard was looked upon with the greatest horror and was called *Ekunguzi*, a term of scorn. Should she marry and her husband discover that she had hair on her face, he was horrified and made her pluck it all out, and stow the hairs away in a gourd for safety. Should one hair be lost, it was believed that either her husband or her child would die. If such a woman belonged to the Abarrira clan, she was taken by members of her clan and bound hand and foot, purifying herbs were tied to her neck and she was drowned.

#### SLAVES

Many of the people owned slaves who were bought and sold like goods. If a man gave a slave a wife and a child was born to them, this child was the property of the owner of the slaves,

who, however, could not sell it but had to keep it in the family.

There were many degrees of service from the bought slaves up to the messengers of the Mugabe.

*Muhuku* = a bought slave who might be used for menial tasks

*Mwambale* = servants in personal attendance on their masters.

*Mwru* = peasants, who cultivated and were to a certain extent independent, though under pastoral masters

*Musumba* = herdsmen who milked and were of the pastoral class

*Bagalagwa* = personal servants of the Mugabe who, after they finished their term of service, were given cows and land

*Banyiginya* = the highest class. These were princes, but the Mugabe might use them as special messengers for confidential work.

### CURRENCY

The cow was the standard by which all prices were regulated. A male slave could be bought for a cow and a bull, while a female slave cost two cows or a cow and a cow-calf.

A bull might be sold for six or eight goats or for a sheep and a ram, or a hoe might be given with the sheep in the place of the ram.

Household utensils were made by the serfs of the agricultural class, to which the smiths also belonged. The pastoral people paid butter and skins for these and for salt, while meat was given for spears, arrows and canoes.

### COUNTING

The pastoral people were accustomed to count and to deal with very large numbers, for the herds amounted to thousands and even tens of thousands. They also used a system of sign-counting, using the fingers of one or both hands. They had, however, no means of indicating dates, unless some outstanding event marked the time.

1. *Emwe*, indicated by extending the index-finger
2. *Ebwi*, two first fingers extended and the others bent inwards into the palm of the hand
3. *Isatu*, index-finger bent inwards and held by the thumb and the other fingers extended

4. *Ina*, four fingers extended while the index-finger is flicked from the thumb against the inside of the second finger
  5. *Itano*, fist closed over the thumb, first finger on the joint of the thumb
  6. *Mukaga*, three first fingers extended and the little finger bent inwards and held by the thumb
  7. *Musanzu*, second finger bent inwards and held by the thumb and others extended
  8. *Munana*, index-finger bent in under the third and flicked against the second
  9. *Mwenda*, second finger on each hand bent in and held by the thumbs and the hands shaken This number is sometimes called *Isaga*
  10. *Ikumi*, both fists closed with the thumbs folded under the fingers
  11. *Ikumi, lumwe*, or *nemwe*
  12. *Ikumi ne biri*
  13. *Ikumi ne isatu*
  14. *Ikumi ne ina*
  20. *Makumi abiri*
  30. *Makumi asatu*
  40. *Makumi ana*
  50. *Makumi atano*
  60. *Makumi mukaga*
  70. *Makumi musanzu*
  80. *Makumi munana*
  90. *Makumi isaga*
  100. *Igana*
  200. *Magana abiri*
- 10,000. *Magana ikumi*

### SEASONS AND TIME

The year was divided into four seasons, beginning with *Akaanda*. This lasted about two months when the sun was hot and the weather good for the cattle. Then came *Kaswa*, three or four months of rainy weather; after which there were some four months of sun and heat, called *Kyanda*, followed by *Empangukano*, two months of rain.

The month was reckoned from the appearance of one new moon to the appearance of the next. This period was divided into two: *Okwezi*, fifteen days when the moon was of use for seeing, and *Omwirima*, fifteen days with little or no light from the moon. One of the royal drums was always sounded when the new moon appeared, to warn the people.

They now divide the year into twelve months according to the western custom:

January = *Biruru* The month of the millet harvest when the weather was dry but with occasional showers of rain

February = *Kata* A dry month with hot sun. The small millet already reaped was stored and the large millet sown



March = *Katumba*. A month of heavy rains when beans were sown and potatoes planted.

April = *Nyakoma*. A rainy month. Guards had to be set upon the growing millet.

May = *Kyabehezi*. The harvest of the large millet. A little rain.

June = *Nyaururwe*. A little rain, often drought and winds.

July = *Kichulansi*. Very hot sun. Some rain. The runners of the sweet potatoes planted.

August = *Kamena*. The rains began to fall and the heat of the sun was less. Small millet sown.

September = *Nyakanga*. A little rain.

October = *Kaswa*. A rainy month. Flying ants and edible grasshoppers appear. The small millet needed weeding.

November = *Musenene*. Heavy rains.

December = *Muzimbezi*. A little rain.

The divisions of the day were.

5-6 a.m. = <i>Kasese</i>	6-9 a.m. = <i>Amasyo gasetuka</i>
9-12 a.m. = <i>Gasugera</i>	1-2 p.m. = <i>Ehangwe</i>
2-3 p.m. = <i>Amasyo neganyuwa</i>	3-5 p.m. = <i>Amanyogakuka</i>
5-6 p.m. = <i>Amasyo omhwebazyo</i>	7-9 p.m. = <i>Ente zataha</i>
10-12 p.m. = <i>Ente zahaga</i>	12 p.m.-3 a.m. = <i>Elumbi</i>
3-5 a.m. = <i>Enkoko zazaga</i>	

Some of the hours through the day have also definite names:

11 a.m. = <i>bagya omu birago</i>	3 p.m. = <i>ente zairira amaka</i>
12 a.m. = <i>bagya ha kwesera</i>	4 p.m. = <i>enyana zataha</i>
1 p.m. = <i>ente zakuka</i>	5 p.m. = <i>batweka omu mahome</i>
2 p.m. = <i>abesezi baruga ha maziba</i>	6 p.m. = <i>ente zataha</i>

Dawn is *omuseke muguguguta* and cock-crow is *enkoko yasubi'ra*. If a cock crows in the night they call it *enkoko yatera ekiro*, and, if it crows in the afternoon, it is *enkoko yaba'ra izoba*. Sunset is *marengi* or *nakuni*.

#### STARS, ETC.

*Kakaga* = the Pleiades

*Kalinga* = Orion's foot

*Abasatu* = Orion's belt

*Enganzi* = evening star

*Nyakinyunyuzi* = morning star

*Rumalanku* = Venus?

*Nyamuziga* = first star of evening

*Okwezi omu hyera* = full moon

*Okwezi kwalinga* = old moon

*Okwezi kutahira* = new moon

*Omuletza oruhemba* = comet

*Ekibunda* = eclipse

## MUSIC AND DANCING

There was little attempt at music among the pastoral people. The women, who were too fat to dance, sat together inside the kraal and one of them played a harp and sang while the others moved their bodies and arms, making a buzzing noise between their lips, the men outside joined in and danced, swaying their bodies to the rhythm and jumping into the air. An account of the dancing among the agricultural people, where both men and women danced standing in the ordinary way, will be found in the description given later of agricultural life.

## GREETINGS AND SALUTATIONS

In the morning they said "*Orairegye?*" which might be translated, "How have you spent the night?" and the answer was the same—"Orairegye." Later in the day they said "*Osibiregye?*" "How have you spent the day?" and the reply was "*Nsibiregye*" or "*Nsibire kirunge*," "I have spent it well." This greeting and answer were used in order to keep the omens good even if a person were known to be ill, in which case the further question was asked, "*Orarota endwara?*" "How is your illness or pain?"

When equals met after an absence, one asked, "*Kaizhe buhorogye?*" and the other answered, "*Kaizhe buhoro*," and both repeated this many times. It was customary to shake hands and often the question, "*Mugumire?*" was asked, to which the answer was "*Tugumire*." These might be translated, "are you without fear at home?" and the answer was "we are quite free."

Anyone meeting an elder had to wait for the elder to say to him "*Mphoro*," to which he replied, "*Eh*." Even the Mugabe would wait for his senior relatives to say this to him. A child might greet its elders with "*Enrege*," an expression of uncertain meaning, to which the reply was "*Eh*."

## CHAPTER VIII

### THE COWS

Long-horned cows—colours—birth of calves—navel cord of a calf—rearing calves—precautions against in-breeding—treatment of cows to make them accept calves and give milk—dewlap—the horns—sickness in the herd—medicine-men—lightning—bleeding cows—cow diseases—death of cows—charity—killing cows—cooking meat—salt for the cows

THE cattle peculiar to Ankole were long-horned, well-built animals something of the Hereford type. They were noted throughout the Lake region, for the length of their horns was often so great that the tips were four or five feet apart. Few of them, however, gave much milk, and the milkman would take from each about a quart, leaving the rest for the calf. Little, if any, attempt was ever made to improve either the milk supply or the quality of the meat, for their aims were to increase their numbers and to have as large a proportion as possible of cow-calves.

Cows were known by different names according to their colours and the following is a list of the names used. As these, however, had in many cases to be accepted from the natives without seeing the actual type of animal indicated, and as natives always find a difficulty in naming or describing colours, the accuracy of the list cannot be vouched for. It will serve, however, to show how the cows were clearly differentiated and how a name constituted a description which enabled a herdsman to pick out from his herd any animal required:

<i>Kahogo</i> , dark red	<i>Kagazo</i> , light red
<i>Kozi</i> , black	<i>Kasa</i> , white with some red or black
<i>Katare</i> , pure white	<i>Kagobi</i> , black and yellow
<i>Kagondo</i> , red and white	<i>Kagabo</i> , black or red with white
<i>Kasecha</i> , yellow with black stripes	on the sides
<i>Kahuru</i> , black and white	<i>Kashaiga</i> , yellowish-white
<i>Katango</i> , black with some white	<i>Kayenzi</i> , red with some black
markings	markings
<i>Kakara</i> , mixed colours, not red or	<i>Karemba</i> , red legs with white or
black	black body
<i>Kasina</i> , brown	<i>Omurara</i> , black with white stripe

Twelve months was said to be the time required by a cow between the birth of one calf and the birth of the next, and the cow was not milked after the sixth or seventh month of gestation.

It was quite common for cows to calve when out grazing, though herdsmen generally kept watch, keeping count of the period by the moons, and, if they thought the time was near, they would leave the cow to pasture near the kraal and not allow her to wander far. If, however, one had her calf while grazing, a herdsman remained to watch her lest she should be left behind as the herd moved on, and be lost. When the calf was born, this man carried it back to the kraal and the cow followed him

If a cow calved in the pasture, the after-birth was left for the wild beasts to eat, but, if the birth took place in the kraal, dogs were called to eat it, unless there was some taboo on the cow or she bore twins, in which cases the after-birth was buried in the dung-heap in the kraal lest the calves should die. If there was a case of cross-birth, a medicine-man was called in and invariably succeeded in turning the calf and bringing about true presentation. The fee given to him for such a service was one sheep.

The cow-men did not like a cow to bear twins, chiefly because the calves were not so strong as when there was only one. If an animal had twins the milk was drunk only by the owner and his unmarried children. Should the same cow bear twins a second time, the milk was given away to prevent the thing happening again.

When a young cow bore her first calf the herdsman went to the old cow, the mother of this young one, and milked a little milk from her on to a tuft of grass (*ezubwe*). He gave this grass to the young cow to eat and, taking another tuft, milked a little milk from her on to this and gave it to the old cow, her dam, to eat. This was supposed to make the calf grow and prevent its dam and the old cow from falling ill.

The navel cord of a calf was carefully watched, and, if it split before falling off, the strands were counted. An even

number of strands was a good omen, indicating that many calves would be born, but an odd number was bad. The umbilical cord was tied together with a strip of bark-cloth so that, when it was dry, all the strands fell away together. It was then wrapped in a ball of cow-dung and preserved. A cord which fell off without splitting was thrown away.

When milking time came, the calf was first allowed to suck for a few moments and was then held before its dam while she was being milked, for they said she could withhold her milk should the calf not be there. If the calf died, its skin was dried and held before the cow; sometimes a cow became quite attached to the dried skin and refused to be milked if it was not there. At other times a cow whose calf had died would be taught to allow the calf of another cow to suck from her, in which case the calf was used at milking time for both cows.

For the first month of its life, a calf was kept in its hut and only allowed out at milking times. Fresh grass was put in the hut every day and at the end of about a month the calf would begin to eat the grass, after which it was allowed to browse for a short time in the cool of the morning and in the evening near the kraal, where it could be watched from the gate. Later it went out with the other calves for longer periods. Until it was seven months old, it was called *Nyana* (calf), but then it was said to *kyukire* (change) and was considered old enough to accompany the herds as they went to pasture. It still sucked from its dam, but this was prevented during the day by smearing the teats with dung. By the time it was a year old, it no longer sucked from the dam, for she, being again with calf, would not permit it to do so. Shortly after this the heifer would probably become pregnant and, when it did so, it was regarded as a full-grown cow. When it was old enough to go with the bull, it was called *erusi* (marriageable), and when it had been with the bull it was called *kibanga*. When it had borne its first calf it was called *ezigazire*, after the second calf, *esubire*, after the third, *ezigiza*, and then no more attention was paid to its age and a good cow went on bearing until she had had as many as twenty calves.



Chief medicine-man of the cows singing his incantations  
to heal a herd of sick cows



Chief medicine-man of the cows

When too old to bear, a cow was called *kichula* or *ngumba*, while a young barren cow was *mberera*. A young bull was called *ekimasa*, and, when old enough to serve cows, it was called *engundu*.

Herdsmen were careful to exchange young bulls to guard against in-breeding and they particularly guarded against a young animal gendering with its own dam. Should this happen, the calf born was called *matembani*, which denoted a calf born within forbidden degrees of consanguinity, and it was never allowed to bear calves. A calf which was born malformed, especially if it was sexless, was called *mbangulane*, which meant that it was worthless.

Cows of the long-horn breed had usually a mark on the small hump and a cow which was born without this mark was regarded as sacred, only the owner and his family might drink milk from it.

Should a cow bear a calf and refuse to allow it to suck, a medicine-man was sent for to treat it. He took the herbs *ekinyangazi ne kibyakurata* and *musogasoga*, powdered them, and mixed them with salt and hot water; this mixture was poured up the cow's nose and some was put upon the calf, which was brought before the dam. The effect usually was that the cow licked the calf and then, accepting it, allowed it to suck from her. If this was unsuccessful the medicine-man went to a shrine and prayed: "The ghost of my father, help me," and tried again. He also made a new fetish which he tied on the cow's horn to induce her to accept her calf. For this service the medicine-man demanded a pot of beer, and, should the owner of the cow refuse to pay this, the man cursed the cow and the calf died. A calf was seldom reared by artificial feeding, though the method was known and on rare occasions used. If the dam finally refused the calf, a foster-mother was sought, but, if one could not be found, the calf was killed and eaten.

If a cow was not giving as much milk as the herdsman considered she should give, he gathered the herbs *omurwhoko* and *ekikamisa wa gali*. These he dried over a fire and rubbed



them to powder, then, with the addition of water, he made them into a ball, full of water and the juice of the herbs. He thrust his hand with the herb ball into the uterus of the cow and squeezed the juice from it. This irritated the passage and caused the milk to flow. The effect on the milk lasted three or four days and the process might have to be repeated. The men said that it did not usually injure the cow, though some affirmed that, if repeated often, it made her barren. This method was at times resorted to to make a cow accept a foster-calf or when she refused her own calf, and the man, after passing his hand into the uterus, wiped it on the calf's back, which caused the cow to lick it and allow it to suck. This process was called to *kuwatika* a cow.

When a cow had not enough milk to nourish her calf, the herdsman often took away the calf and gave it to a cow which had a bull-calf, killing the bull-calf and leaving the first cow to cease giving milk and to bear again.

When a cow, after having a calf, did not again become pregnant as soon as they expected, the owner milked her only once a day. If this had not the desired effect, he took some of the herb *mpara*, chewed it, and squirted the juice from his mouth into and round the uterus; this set up irritation and caused the cow to seek the bull at once. The process was called to *okuhagvrana* the cow.

A cow which developed the loose folds of skin below its throat, known as dewlap, was regarded as a blessing to the owner. As this developed and the flesh reached the ground, it was tied up to prevent it from dragging in the dust. Such an animal might not be put to death in the ordinary way by spearing it in the head but had to have its neck broken by strong men who twisted its head round sharply. Only the owner of the kraal and his family might eat the flesh.

When a cow with one horn turned up and one down had a calf, a knife or a spear was heated and a mark burned on one of the horns. This was regarded as a decoration and other burns were sometimes made on cows for the same purpose.

When a cow's horns turned down and grew so long as to



The chief medicine-man of the cows performing his incantations to heal a sick herd



Chief medicine-man of the cows

get in its way and hinder its walking and grazing, the owner took a bit of stick to the Mugabe and told him what had happened. The Mugabe, taking the stick, spat on it and handed it back to the owner, who took it to the cow and tapped the horns with it. The horns were then cut off close to the head with a hot knife or axe. To stop the bleeding and heal the wounds they were seared with a heated spear, and a medicine of the herbs *miseka* and *mugasa*, powdered and mixed with flour of millet, was sprinkled on the wounds. The cow soon recovered from the operation and was none the worse.

When a cow with straight horns was given to goring its companions, the herdsman burned a notch on each horn and bent the tips back so that the horns were blunt.

In each district there were cow-doctors or medicine-men who were called to assist the herdsmen when anything went wrong with the cows. They knew the different herbs to use for illnesses, and they were also said to know drugs which would make cows bear cow-calves. They were paid for their work with sheep or goats.

If sickness broke out among the cattle in a kraal, the owner called in a cow-doctor and asked him to discover by augury the cause of the illness and the remedy. In the evening a bull or an old cow that was past bearing was given to the medicine-man, who tied a bunch of herbs round its neck, took it outside, and drove it round the kraal. If the illness was affecting more than one kraal in the vicinity, he took the same animal to each and drove it round outside them, keeping it on the move the whole night. At daybreak he brought the cow to the entrance of the kraal and killed it there, cutting its throat and catching the blood in a vessel. He took a bunch of the herbs *nyawera* and *mugosola* and either sprinkled all the members of the kraal with the blood or touched them with it on their foreheads, arms and legs. The cattle were then sprinkled and first the people and then the cows went out of the kraal, jumping over the body of the dead cow as it lay in the gateway. The medicine-man took the bunch of herbs from the cow's neck and tied

them over the gateway so that the cows passed under them when they entered in the evening, and the disease was thus prevented from returning to the kraal. He removed the carcass, for the meat was his, and no member of the kraal might eat of it, for to do so would be to cause the disease to return. Often, in addition to this magic, the cows would be treated with herbal medicine given in water.

There was a special medicine-man who was called in when lightning had struck men or cows. He had a whistle which he blew during a storm to make the lightning pass over without doing damage. Should a man or a cow be struck and killed, people brought either hoes or sticks and beat them over the body to cause the lightning to come out and the spirit to return. When lightning killed some of a herd of cows, the rest of the herd was kept in the place and the owner was sent for. He spent the night there fasting; no one might spit, no fire might be lighted, and no stranger passing the spot could go on but had to stay the night. On the next morning the special medicine-man arrived. His first duty was to discover by divination the cause which had led to this disaster and none of the cows could be milked until this was known and an appropriate gift had been made to the god of thunder to pacify him. When this had been done, the herd was driven home to the kraal, the cows were milked and the calves fed and then they went out to pasture as usual. The medicine-man was given two cows as his fee and the owner might thereafter again drink milk and kill or sell his cows. The ceremony was called *kanghula* or purifying the herd. Should one of the cows bear a malformed calf during this time it was taken to the Lake Karagwe and thrown in as an offering to the offended spirit who resided there. A pot of water was drawn from the lake and brought to the owner who sprinkled some on his family and washed himself with it. The owner was not allowed to drink milk from the cow which bore a malformed calf under these circumstances, though, when one was born under ordinary circumstances, he alone might drink the milk of the dam or eat the flesh of the calf.

Cows were often bled, usually for medicinal purposes. This was done by tying a string round the cow's neck to make the veins swell; an arrow, with a guard to prevent it from going too far, was then shot into the vein and the amount of blood required was taken.

#### COW DISEASES

*Ezwa* Foot and mouth disease. The medicine-man, or one of the principal men in the kraal, bled the cows in the morning and, when they had gone to pasture, he poured the blood on the central fire. When it had congealed and dried, he scraped it up and put it into small bundles of dried elephant-grass to be used as torches. In the evening when the cows returned, the torches were lighted and men went out of the kraal and carried them amongst the cattle, calling on the disease to release the cows and go. The cows were then driven into the kraal, their feet were washed with hot water from a special pot, *oluhega*, and those whose mouths were too sore to allow them to feed were fed with grass plucked for them by the men. Cows seldom died of this complaint but were isolated and treated as described above and eventually recovered.

The medicine-man pronounced a charm to prevent the illness from spreading, and amulets were hung round the cows' necks. The inmates of the kraal were forbidden to eat salt, men might not go to their wives, no stranger might enter the kraal, and no girl from it might visit friends in another kraal.

*Amasyihu*. A disease which attacked calves. The head and face broke out into sores and the calf died, as they said, "of a rotten liver." No treatment was used, but the animal was left to get well or die

*Obuzimba*. The cow's body swelled as though it was becoming very fat, its glands and throat also swelled and it usually died in three or four days. The herdsmen sometimes treated this by blistering, but as a rule the disease was left to run its course

*Obusaghi*. If a jackal fell into a water-hole and was drowned, any cows which drank the water died.

*Muzuzu.* The cow was taken with a shivering fit and died at once. No cure was known.

*Omulaso.* This disease lasted a month, after which the animal died, the meat might not be eaten.

*Kyrha.* A lung and heart trouble, contagious and fatal

*Kabube.* An illness which affected the joints so that the animal wanted to lie down. If it was forced to walk about it recovered.

*Kukonagire.* A calf's sickness. It affected the legs and at times the body swelled. No treatment was known the sickness ran its course and was frequently fatal.

*Omuhandu.* The ears cracked and bled, and the hair of the animal stood on end, but the animal usually recovered if a little care was taken of it

*Mulyamu.* Rinderpest. A disease only known in recent years. No cure.

*Kepumpula.* Swellings on the thighs, shoulders and backbone

The flies which tormented cows were called *Engoha*, but those which brought disease were *Mbalabala* and *Nkubikisi*.

When a cow was suffering from constipation or from retention of the urine, the herdsman made a fetish of hippopotamus skin and a tuft of hippopotamus hair and walked among the cows waving this over them. He then took it to the suffering cow and pushed it into her uterus, which caused the urine to flow

When a cow died, the owner mourned five days for it and refrained from sexual intercourse with his wife. On the sixth day he squeezed the juice from the herb *mwonyo* into a pot and he and his wife, sitting together, stirred the juice with their left hands, put some in their mouths, and spat it out three times to purify themselves and the kraal. The man then had sexual intercourse with his wife. This was to prevent other cows from dying in the same way.

If the only cow of a poor herdsman died, he visited the members of his clan and begged from them, often getting two or three cows in the place of his lost one. The poor were



Peasant girl in goat-skin dress





Elderly peasant

always looked after by their relatives, and, should a man who was able to help refuse his aid to a poor brother, he was marked and no one came to mourn at his funeral. The effect of this was believed to be that he suffered loss of friends in the other world, to which he was sent without the usual lamentations.

It was considered wrong to kill cows which were still able to bear, and the ordinary herdsmen, though they ate the meat of any cow that died, never killed cows except on very special occasions such as marriages or funerals. When it was necessary to kill an animal, they chose a cow too old to bear or a bull that was not required. The animal was killed by spearing or striking it with an axe on the head just behind the horns, a method which did not waste much of the blood, for it remained in the meat. The killing was always done outside the kraal where the men assembled to eat the meat, cutting it up into small squares and roasting it over a fire round which they sat. Some meat would be handed in to the kraal to the women, who either ate it themselves or cooked it for their husbands. Among the wealthy cow-people the cooking was always done by slaves, but in the poorer classes wives cooked for their husbands, though water and fire-wood were brought to them by the men.

Meat was cut into small pieces and either roasted on spits or boiled and served in wooden bowls or closely woven wicker vessels. If it was boiled, millet was sometimes served with it, though the grain was never cooked with the meat but boiled in water separately.

When an animal was killed for the Mugabe's use, any blood that flowed was caught and drunk by the servants of the Mugabe. The skin of the cow, unless the Mugabe gave special orders, went to the royal skin-dresser and was prepared for the use of the Mugabe's wives, and the head was given to the fire-wood carriers. The cook, who was always of an agricultural clan, divided the animal. The Mugabe might only eat meat from the shoulder, one leg went to his wives, any given to the herdsmen had to be taken from the back without bones, and

the rest was cooked for the Mugabe's guests and other members of his household.

When a chief killed a cow, he followed the royal custom in dividing it, though he was not restricted to any special part for himself. When the Mugabe or a chief gave his men a cow to kill for their own food, they had always to return the heart and tongue to the owner, for they were forbidden to eat these parts.

### SALT FOR THE COWS

It was considered essential to the health of the cattle that they should have salt once each month, and the carrying of salt was one of the tasks which a cow-man might undertake. Like building a kraal or a house, it was work done for the sake of the cattle and therefore not derogatory to his dignity. All sorts of things from goats and sheep to household utensils were taken to barter for the salt. When a man had left his home to go to one of the salt-markets, his wife might not have sexual relations with any man nor even cross the doorstep when a man was on it or shake hands with a man. When the man returned with the salt he took it to his house, and that night he had to sleep on the floor near the fire and keep apart from his wife and other women until the salt had been given to the cows, which was done the next day.

In the morning, after the cows had gone out to pasture and the kraal had been swept, the owner had the loads placed in a line before him in the kraal. A pot of milk was brought and he drank and puffed a little over each bundle. He then took a pot of butter and rubbed a little on each bundle. One of the logs used for filling up the gateway, a thong for tying the legs of restive cows during milking, and a bunch of purificatory herbs were brought and laid to smoulder on the central fire.

When it was time for the cows to come home in the evening, the salt was taken to the watering-place where large troughs were made and lined with clay and filled with water. The salt was added to the water, and when the animals had finished

drinking they were driven home. As they entered the kraal, a boy stood at one side of the entrance and a girl at the other, each holding a pot of water and a bunch of the herb *nyawera*, with which they sprinkled the cows as they entered, saying, "Grow fat, give much milk, and have many calves." This ensured the best results and no evil effects from the drinking of the salt water

## CHAPTER IX

### AGRICULTURE AND INDUSTRIES

The agricultural people—clothing—ornaments—music and dancing—ownership of land—care of land—cultivation of millet—care of the crops—harvest—storing grain—grinding corn—other crops—tobacco—brewing millet and plantain beer—building huts—furniture—pottery—carpenters—smiths—smelting—the smith's anvil and hammer

THE agricultural people of the lake region were probably early inhabitants of the land, who were subdued by immigrating hordes of pastoral people. These did not exterminate the conquered races but made them their serfs to do the work which their own customs forbade them to do for themselves. The agricultural people were not slaves, for they were free to move about the country as they would and to leave one master and join another at their own will. They were, however, generally attached to certain districts and, when once settled, they seldom cared to move.

For clothing boys and men of the agricultural people wore one goat- or calf-skin, passing under the left arm and tied on the right shoulder. This hung down to the thigh or even to the knees but was open down the right side, no attempt being made to hide the person. The skins were usually roughly dressed and the more wealthy members of the agricultural class had them carefully prepared.

Girls, when children, often ran about naked or wore a skin like that of the boys, but it was tied on the left shoulder and passed under the right arm. As they grew up the size of the skin was increased and it was more carefully dressed and softened. The hair was either shaved off or worn inside next the body. When married, a woman wore three or four skins stitched together and fastened with a belt round her waist, which was the sign of a married woman.

After marriage a woman wore ornaments of which the most important were the anklets, without which no married

woman's dress was complete. She also wore bracelets and neck ornaments of wire or elephant-tail hairs and beads. The wire anklets and bracelets were made and fixed on by the smith, who was given fourteen or more goats by the husband for his work. In addition to this he invariably took for himself one of the ornaments he had made, and incantations were pronounced over it to remove from all of them any evil that might be attached to them.

The serfs were fond of dancing, in which both men and women indulged, though they danced apart and generally at different times. The drums used to accompany the dancing were ordinary water-pots which were filled to different levels with water. The drummers were armed with sticks to which pads of reeds, rather larger than the mouths of the pots, were attached with fibre. With these the men beat on the mouths of the pots, producing a sound not unlike that of drums, while others sang, danced, and gesticulated in time to the music.

Girls and young women, wearing skin-aprons stood round the drums, some of them with flat rattles. These were made of hollow reeds which formed cases some ten inches long by half an inch wide and were filled with seeds. Ten or more of these cases were secured side by side in a frame, and this was shaken up and down in time to the music. Others accompanied the rhythm by singing and beating their hands on their skin-aprons in front, which made a dull sound.

Certain tracts of land were given by the Mugabe to chiefs and they could permit peasants to cultivate plots on that land, but as a rule a peasant could cultivate any piece of land he liked and there were no restrictions on his breaking up new land except previous occupation. A man had merely to dig a little or even to pluck some grass from the plot he meant to dig, take it home, and tie it to the roof of his house as a sign of possession. After that, should any man seek to cultivate that land, the first comer informed him of his ownership. If the intruder went away all was well, but, if he objected, there was a fight and the original claimant, if worsted, might appeal to the district-chief. Even if the first owner had left the land

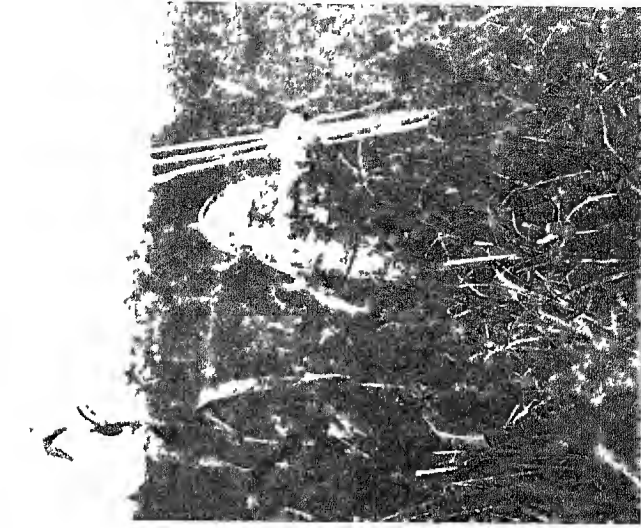
for some years, he had the right, if he had dug it, to return and occupy it. An intruder, even if he had made improvements and enlarged the plot, could not claim the land if the first owner came back and lit a fire as a sign that he had returned. If there was trouble, the matter was brought before the district-chief and settled by ordeal. The disputants were given each a plantain root to eat, and this made the fraudulent claimant ill, while the true owner felt no bad effects. The man thus proved to be in the wrong might be fined anything from two goats or a sheep to as many as twenty goats.

When a man started to dig his field, the first sod cut had to be carried home and kept there until harvest, to ensure a good crop and success.

No attempt was ever made to fertilise land, for such an idea was entirely foreign to the minds of the people. Land was plentiful and if one field ceased to yield to the satisfaction of the owner, all he had to do was to break up fresh ground, leaving the old field for a time, or perhaps entirely. After a few years, when nature had to some extent restored the necessary properties to the soil, or when, as the native said, the ground was rested, he might try the old site again. If it then repaid his efforts, he might continue to cultivate it for a time, but, if not, he would probably forsake it entirely.

Artificial irrigation was unknown and crops were only grown in the wet season, though there were rare instances when a man would choose a plot of low-lying land near a river and raise a crop during the dry season. Such rare cases prove that it was not ignorance of the possibilities of the land but rather indolence which prevented the people from having fresh vegetable food all the year round. After harvest they dried and stored sufficient grain to keep them in food until the rains came and made it possible to grow a fresh crop.

The main crop was the small millet commonly called *bulo*, which was sown in August and September in ground that had been carefully hoed and prepared. When a man was going to sow his first seed for the season he made his preparations at 3 a.m. and wakened his family with the first streaks of dawn,



Scare-crow in cornfield



A post in the scare-crow telegraph line  
showing resonant objects





Water-pots used as drums



Dancing to the rhythm of the water-pot drums

for they had to be awake while he went to sow. If on the way to the field he met a person he disliked, he turned back and refrained from sowing seed that day; during the time of the sowing husband and wife had to be careful to have sexual relations only with each other, lest the seed should fail to germinate and the weeds grow.

When the plants were a few inches high they were thinned out and those pulled up were carried home, where they were eaten either uncooked and seasoned with salt or boiled. The rains made the crops grow rapidly, and in January, after six months' growth, the millet ripened. As the grain filled out flocks of birds visited the fields and it was necessary to employ scare-crows to drive these off. Children were employed in most villages for this purpose, and they had to be specially on the alert in the early morning and again in the evening, for at these times the birds were particularly active. These young people often showed much ingenuity in their devices to save labour. Figures were made of grass and armed with sticks so that in the distance they resembled living persons waving sticks. At other places poles eight to ten feet long were firmly fixed at intervals in the ground; from the tops of these were hung large snail-shells, thin blades of iron, and other articles and the poles were connected by a cord which led to some tree or hillock, where an observer sat and jerked the string from time to time so that all the things tied to the poles rattled. At the same time the watchers shouted and used clappers of flat boards which made a noise loud enough to be distinctly heard over the field. In some places men and women built huts in their fields and lived there from the time the fresh shoots appeared until harvest, to protect the crops from wild pigs and other nocturnal visitors that might destroy them.

Only the family might eat of the first-fruits of the crop and the grindstones might not be used by anyone else after the corn was ground until the first-fruits had been eaten. Should either the man or his wife give any of the food away before this, the other would die. For this family meal the grain need

not be ground and cooked, for even to eat a little of it uncooked would remove this taboo.

When the harvest was ready, the wife went one day alone to the field and picked two kinds of grass, the seeds of which had burrs and stuck to the clothing. These she made into a kind of pad and laid it in the field, putting a stone upon it. She then gathered two small sheaves of the grain and placed them so that they stood over the pad. This was supposed to bring a plentiful harvest.

Next morning the man and his wife came together to reap the grain as soon as the dew had dried off it. They were careful to leave a patch for the husband's mother, who came herself and cut it and carried it home. Should they neglect this observance, the seed from that particular field would be useless the following year.

The reaping was a long and tedious business, for the grain was cut head by head with some six inches of stem and tied into small bundles. These were put in baskets and carried to a spot in the field where they were heaped together in a pile. A hole was made in the centre of the heap to allow the moisture to escape as the grain dried, and the heap was left four or five days to ripen by the heat generated. The heap was covered by night with plantain or other leaves to protect it against the heavy dews or rain, and it became very hot so that the grain matured quickly. If it was desired to hasten the ripening process, a pit some two feet deep was dug and the grain put in and covered over so that the heat generated ripened it in two or three days.

When the artificial ripening process was completed, the ears were spread out in the sun on the threshing-floor to dry and the grain either fell out or was beaten out with a short stick as the head of corn was held in the hand, the grain falling on the threshing-floor, which was merely a flat place swept clean of dust and often smeared over with cow-dung. This work was done by the women, who also winnowed the grain by pouring it from a flat basket held up as high as the head, so that the wind carried away the chaff.



Large grain basket



Potters

The granaries were large baskets four or five feet high, smeared with cow-dung outside and inside and raised about two feet above the ground on stones or stakes. They were covered with detachable thatched roofs which could be raised to take out the grain. The first grain had to be put in by the man, who got into the store to do it. If he was away, his wife had to await his return, because, if she stored the grain before he put in the first basketful, he would die when he ate it. When required for use the grain was ground between stones to a coarse flour and made into stiff porridge.

Each hut had a slab of stone either under the eaves or near the door, which was used as the grindstone. It was generally two feet long by one foot wide, and a second stone four or five inches long and four wide, with a flat surface, was used to rub the grain to flour. The lower stone was raised a few inches from the ground with one side a little higher than the other, to allow the flour, as it was ground, to fall down into a basket placed to catch it. The woman who ground knelt at the higher end of the big stone with a basket of grain by her side and, taking a handful at a time from this, she rubbed it to flour between the stones. Naturally such flour contained a certain amount of grit so that porridge made from it was liable to make anyone ill whose system was not accustomed to such rough diet.

The time of harvest was a season for rejoicing, not only because there was an abundance of food but also because at this time they had freedom from the strain of necessary work and good supplies of grain for brewing beer. This season was thus the natural time for marriages, dances, and other festivities, and the people looked forward to it as an opportunity for relaxation and indulgence in beer-drinking. They cast all cares aside and gave themselves up to a time of merriment.

As long as his store lasted the peasant took grain from time to time to his pastoral master. There was no stated amount, but he took small supplies until he found his store getting low, when he took a large basketful, and this was understood by the master to indicate the last supply for the season.

This small millet was the only kind of food which was stored for supplying future needs, but they grew three other kinds of millet which were used more especially for brewing. Plantains and sweet potatoes were used to eke out the supply of millet. Peas, beans, ground-nuts and marrows were grown as additions to this food and were used as a relish in place of meat, which was seldom to be got, while maize was also cultivated, though it was looked upon as a luxury to be eaten between meals and they never considered it a part of their diet.

Tobacco was largely grown, for it was used both by pastoral and agricultural people. Men and old women smoked it and many young women chewed it. A few plants were grown near the hut on the dust-heap where the sweepings from the hut, which included the dung from goats and sheep and the dust from the wood-fire, were thrown. The dust-heap was thus a fertile spot and tobacco plants always thrived there and produced very good leaves. Peasants rarely attempted to prepare the leaves, which were merely dried in the sun and rubbed to small pieces and dust before being smoked.

The story of the introduction of tobacco into the country is as follows. During the reign of Ruhinda of Ankole, the king of Karagwe, also called Ruhinda, sent a medicine-man with six bags of tobacco, saying that it was medicine which would make Ruhinda of Ankole well and strong. The two kings were friends, so Ruhinda tried the tobacco, and, finding it soothing, went on and became a smoker. Later the chiefs learned about this and some of them took to smoking. When the medicine-man found his stock running out, he sowed two plots and grew more, showing the people how to prepare it before he returned to his own country.

#### BREWING

The people of Ankole were very fond of drink and brewed beer whenever it was possible. To make millet-beer, the millet was first put into water for four days so that it began to sprout. It was then spread on mats in the sun to dry and

mixed with an equal amount of dry grain. The whole of this was ground to flour between stones, mixed with boiling water and boiled. After standing four days, it was again boiled, by which time the amount was reduced to one-fourth of the original. To this more grain, which had been wetted and allowed to sprout, was added and the whole stood in pots for two days and was then boiled again with the addition of water and more unprepared millet. This was poured into pots, and from a large pot, in which some of the first boiling had been left, a little was added to each pot, making in the end about ten times the original amount. This was left for a night and was then filtered through papyrus fibre. The result was a thick liquid which was ready for use.

While the beer was being prepared, the man engaged in the brewing might not touch butter or have relations with any women except his own wife.

To make plantain-beer, the plantains, of the kind known as the male or beer-making plantain, were cut when fully grown but not ripe and put over a slow fire of millet-chaff or cow-dung in a shallow pit for three days to make them fully ripe. They were then pulped in a large wooden trough like a bath. A quantity of millet which had been prepared as malt in the way described above was mixed with the juice and the whole covered for two days until it fermented, after which it was filtered and was ready for use.

If the beer was made from the first plantains cut from a new garden, the owner had to drink it himself to ensure the success of the plantation.

### BUILDING

Every youth was expected to assist in building huts either for his own family or for friends, so that by the time he reached the age when he required a hut for himself he was quite competent to make it.

From the time a man started to collect materials for a new house he had to avoid all women other than his wife, who on her part had to observe the same taboo and admit only her



husband to her bed. Should one or the other offend in this matter, the materials which had been collected were useless and might only be used as fire-wood. If the guilt was concealed and the building proceeded with, the man would die.

The huts built by these peasants were of the bee-hive shape, and in size were seldom more than eighteen feet in diameter and ten feet high at the apex, many of the huts being much smaller than this. Six or seven poles of light timber supported the structure and over these was woven a framework of basketry like an inverted round hamper, millet stems bound together with strips of cord from papyrus stems being largely used for this. Papyrus stems were often interlaced with the millet stems to strengthen the structure, and the whole was overlaid with a thick covering of grass. The floor was simply the ground, which was smoothed by hoeing it over and beating it hard with sticks. The fire-place was composed of three large stones placed in a triangle so that a pot might rest upon them, should a second pot be required two more stones were placed to form, with one of the first three, a second triangle, the space beneath the pot being sufficient to allow fire-wood to be thrust under it.

Little furniture was used, but among the more progressive there might be a bedstead composed of four stakes, eighteen inches long, with forked tops. These stakes were imbedded in the floor and in the forks were side, head and foot pieces, to which laths of papyrus stems were secured. On these was spread a layer of grass or a cow-skin on which the owner and his wife lay, covered with any clothing they might have or with a bark-cloth or cow-skin if they were of the more prosperous members of the community. A few water-pots, several cooking-pots of various sizes, and two or three baskets were all the utensils required, and a hoe or perhaps two, one or two knives, the man's spears and shield, and a few fetishes completed the whole of their possessions. In all cases the furniture, bed-clothes and utensils depended upon the abilities and exertions of the couple themselves, for the more progressive would take the trouble to have better and more



Carpenters making milk-pots



Milk-vessels and washing-bowls of wood

comfortable surroundings, which would be lacking in the case of the indolent or incompetent. The live stock of a prosperous peasant would be a few goats and sheep which by night were tethered to pegs in the floor near the walls of the hut

When the house was finished, should a sparrow enter it before the man took possession, or if any man slept in it with the owner's wife before the owner himself did so, he would never live in it. If one of his children was the first person to fall down near it, or if some person carrying millet spilt some near the house, it was a bad omen. To avoid these dangers, they brought a child belonging to some other family and made it fall down near the house, and someone brought a grindstone and turned it up against the house, letting a little flour fall from it.

#### POTTERY

The potter went out to the nearest swamp to get his own clay when he wanted it. He brought the lump of clay home and put it in a small pit, covering it to keep it from drying hard, and left it for seven days. When about to make pots, he ground up some broken pots and mixed the dust with the new clay, adding some juice of the herb *mwelengo* to keep the pots from breaking. He worked up the clay to a stiff putty on a cow-skin, and started to mould the pot by making the bottom in a shallow hole or in the bottom of a broken pot. He then made the clay into long rolls and built up the sides of the pot with these, smoothing the clay as he built them up with the curved shell of a gourd which he moistened frequently in a pot of water by his side. The pot while in course of being made was called *ntango*, and when it was drying before being fired, a process which took some six to nine days, it was called *musingo*.

The potters of Ankole never attained to the skill of those of Kitara, for there were few men or women who devoted much time to the art. Each family had its man or woman who made pots, and it was a rare thing for pots to be carried to any recognised market-place for sale. The Mugabe alone

had a few more skilled potters who supplied his needs, so that there was no competition and no incentive to improve the pottery. There were some milk-pots of a graceful shape, with long slender necks, but the sides were thick and the clay was brittle and not so well worked as in those made by the Bakitara. The water- and cooking-pots were thick unpretentious vessels and no attempt was made to beautify them.

### CARPENTERS

The Ankole carpenters were superior to the other artisans, though they rarely advanced from the well-known shapes of vessels used by their forefathers. They were a body of men belonging to the serf class, whose fathers had somehow learned the art of wood-working and passed on the knowledge to their children, who took up the work they laid down in old age or at death. The Mugabe had a number of carpenters who were his special workmen and lived in places allotted to them by him. All the needs of the royal household were supplied by them.

The wooden vessels in common use were milk-pots, butter-pots, meat-dishes, water- and washing-pots and troughs for making beer, and the carpenters also made stools. Milk-pots were made from a tree called *musa*, large pails for drawing water from *kirikiti*, and meat-dishes and washing-pots from *emituba* and *mzika*, while for stools they used *emituba*.

The tools used by the carpenters were long gouges, adzes, and scrapers, and they might never sell their tools even to pay fines, for to do so would cause them certain ruin.

The carpenter, when he required timber for his work, went out himself to cut his tree, if on his way he met a man whom he disliked or who had a grudge against him, he returned home, for he knew he would not find a suitable tree that day. When he found the right tree in the forest he felled it, using a small hatchet formed of an iron blade tapered like a wedge and fixed in a strong haft two feet long. This was his only instrument for cutting the tree into short logs, for he possessed no saws and did not know the use of them. It took him three

days to cut the chunk of wood he required for a pot, and he carried it home and buried it under chips in his house to season before he began to shape it. The period allowed for seasoning the timber varied according to the man's requirements, but most timber was used before it was fully seasoned. Three days were then required for the making, one day to shape the pot and two to hollow it out and finish it.

When a man wanted to make a new beer-bath, he brewed a quantity of beer and asked six carpenters and thirty or more friends to come and help him. They went with him to find and fell the tree and cut off the length required for the bath, and when this had been done they drank the beer and feasted on a goat. Until the carpenters had made the bath, the owner might not sleep with his wife, and this taboo continued until beer had been made in it. His wife also had to observe strict continency. The first beer made in a new bath might not be sold but had to be drunk by the owner and his family or friends.

### SMITHS

The smiths, like the carpenters, belonged to the serf community, but they did not attain to the skill of the carpenters in their work. They formed a single class, for the men who did the smelting were also the men who worked the metal up into the required articles. The smiths went to the hills to fetch their own iron-stone and, as they used that which lay near the surface in abundance, they seldom had to dig more than one or at most two feet to get the kind they wanted. This was broken up into bits about the size of walnuts, tied up in bundles of grass and carried to the place where the smelting was to be done. Their charcoal was prepared from the small trees and scrub which grew in the neighbourhood.

During the time spent in smelting, the men had to be careful not to have sexual relations with anyone but their own wives. No man might step over the wood of which he was making his charcoal, and, should he be seated on the door-step of his hut, no one might enter or leave until he rose.

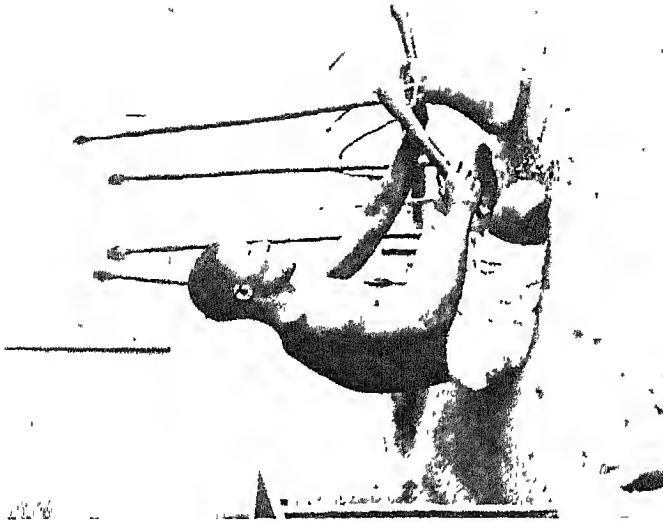
No woman who was menstruating might come near him. These taboos were in force until the iron had been smelted and the smith had made a hoe from it.

When the wood and iron were ready, a hole was dug some two or three feet deep and two feet in diameter, and lined with clay, the clay walls being continued to some three feet above the ground. When dry this furnace was filled with layers of dry reeds and grass, charcoal and iron-stone. An arched top or dome, with a hole four or five inches across in the centre, was built over the top of the furnace. Round this were arranged the bellows, probably three pairs of them, consisting of round earthen pots, open at the top, with a nozzle on one side. Over the top of the pot a goat-skin was fastened loosely enough to be moved up and down by a stick fixed to its middle. The nozzles of each pair of bellows entered an earthenware pipe which opened into the furnace, and each pair was worked by one man who sat between them and used one hand to each.

The smelting was begun at six o'clock in the morning and the fire was kept burning until two o'clock in the afternoon, the charcoal being added when necessary through the hole in the top of the furnace. After the fire had been allowed to die down, the iron was left to cool for some six days before being dug out. Any that was not thought to be properly smelted and clean was smelted again, but the clean metal was cut up into blocks of the sizes required for spears, hoes, knives and other implements, and the smith carried these off to his own home.

The tools of a smith were not many. His anvil was a large stone and the hammer a bit of iron, six or eight inches long rounded and tapered slightly for the hand-grip. He might possess a pair of tongs, but more usually he pointed the iron on which he was working and forced it into a piece of wood, or, splitting the wood, he slipped the iron in and bound the wood together. His furnace was a shallow hole into which he put charcoal and inserted the nozzles of bellows like those he used for smelting, though here one pair sufficed.

Should the smith require a new anvil he went about among the hills to find a suitable stone. On the night before he went



Carpenter, showing his tools and method of hollowing a wooden milk-pot

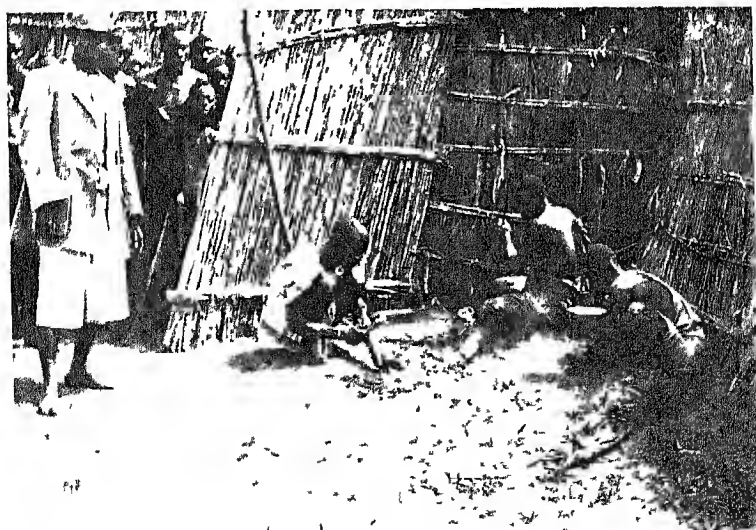


Smiths with bellows and furnace





Carpenters making pails and hand washing-bowls



Smith working on a stone anvil

out he had to keep apart from all women except his chief wife, and next morning he went out, fasting, with some other men whom he had engaged, to find a stone. When it was found, the men carried it home for him, and he called his relatives to participate in a feast which he made as a recompense for the bearers of the stone. A hole was then made in the ground where the anvil was to stand, millet and certain purificatory herbs were put into the hole and the anvil set on them, whereupon it was ready for use without any further ceremony.

When the smith wished to make a new hammer he began by collecting a large quantity of food to make a feast, for which he killed not less than two and sometimes as many as six goats, and invited some twenty of his fellow-craftsmen to come and help him. The iron for the hammer was already smelted and had been brought to the house without cleaning off any of the fibre in which it had been wrapped and which still clung to it. The men began to work at nine o'clock in the evening and finished the hammer about eight o'clock next morning. Then a pit deep enough to hold three or four gallons was dug and filled with water, and the smith's wife, his father and mother, and his grandparents were summoned from a hut in which they were waiting. The father and grandfather took the hot hammer and put it into the water to harden it, passing sacred herbs over it as it lay in the water, to purify and bless it. The hammer was then carried into the house and the feast was prepared and eaten. Any fibre which had clung to the metal was brought and put at the head of the man's bed, while the hammer was laid at the foot, and the man lay with his wife on the bed to complete the work.

After two or three days, the smith took the hammer and made a knife or a hoe from some of the smelting of iron from which the hammer had been made. This he gave to some member of his family to show that the hammer was a good tool.

As in the case of the carpenters, the Mugabe commanded the services of the most skilful smiths for any work he required. He paid no wages, but made presents of goats or sheep to these artisans, who were never allowed to suffer from any of their transactions with him.

## CHAPTER X

### BIRTH

Importance of sons—taboos during pregnancy—treatment of a pregnant woman—the midwife—birth—the after-birth—the fire in the hut—eight days of seclusion—birth among peasants—the umbilical cord—the return of an absent husband—feeding of infants—naming children—cutting teeth—learning to walk and to talk—marriage arrangements—games—training of boys and girls—taboos during menstruation—twins—care of an insane woman in pregnancy—treatment of a woman whose children die in infancy—treatment of a wife who bears only girl children—taboo on a wife who leaves her husband

IT was the desire of every woman to marry and have children, for an unmarried woman had no position or standing in the community and a man would never be satisfied with a childless wife. Sons were especially desired, for a son inherited his father's property, and, should the husband die, the very existence of the widow depended on her son. Among poor people without property it was the usual custom for a son to provide for his parents in their old age, and among better class people it was not at all uncommon for a father who felt himself growing old to hand over his property to his son, who would then provide for him while he lived out the remainder of his life free from responsibility. The most important reason, however, for desiring a son was that it was the duty of a son to perform the funeral rites after his father's death and to see that all the necessary observances were paid, so that the ghost might take its proper position in the other world. If no one attended to this matter, the poor ghost was despised by its ghostly clan-fellows and other ghosts completely ignored it.

There were very few women who did not bear children, for the sexual freedom which a woman enjoyed after marriage made it almost certain that she would bear children unless, indeed, she was barren, which very seldom occurred. Owing to the tender age at which a woman was married, it might be some years before she began to bear children, but cases

of girls becoming mothers at twelve and thirteen years of age were not infrequent.

When a woman found that she was pregnant she did not make any change in her usual diet, though she would eat beef in preference to grain, if milk was scarce. In some clans certain kinds of salt were forbidden to women in this condition. She remained with her husband but was careful to allow no other man to have sexual relations with her. At the end of two months her husband gave her a strip of lizard-skin called *ngonge* or *luzaro*, which she tied round her waist and wore until the child was born. On it she hung small bits of stick, two inches long and as thick as a pencil, together with a few cowry-shells, which were supposed to ensure a healthy child. This served as a sign to other men that only her husband, her father, and her uterine brothers might touch her. Until he had given his wife this amulet to wear, the husband might not go to war or undertake any journey, and a woman never left home after she had conceived unless the medicine-man ordered her to go away.

The husband's mother or some other woman who was versed in medicines made a mixture of herbs for the wife to drink to keep her bowels in order and to make the baby strong and healthy. The mixture was composed of the herbs *ekikoni nyabitu* and *omugabogabo*, which were dried, powdered, and boiled in cow's urine. Salt was added and a little of this was drunk in milk once a week, or more often if necessary. Another purgative used was *zizi* or *efuha*, prepared in the same way as the first.

Once during the period of pregnancy, a woman was made to drink the first milk from a cow that had just calved. This was usually left to the calf and women did not care to drink it. The husband's father, however, would insist upon it, and, if she refused, he might use force to make her take it because of its value to the child she had conceived.

A woman with child might not tread upon cow-dung, especially from a sick cow. She had to wear sandals to prevent contact with the dung while she moved about the kraal.

About the eighth month of pregnancy the husband sent to his father-in-law to ask him for some seeds called *empeka* and *birunga*. These were threaded on string like beads and made into a circlet which was worn on the head by the expectant mother to ensure a safe birth. During labour these were taken off the mother and put on to the neck of the churn until the child was born, when they were put upon its wrist as a charm. They believed that a woman always conceived during the increasing moon, and a child, to be lucky, must not be born during the days when the moon was waning or invisible.

The woman was waited upon by her mother-in-law, or, should she be dead or for any reason unable to come, the woman's own mother would come to attend her. When the birth took place, one or two other women were present, but the responsibility rested upon the mother-in-law, who acted as midwife. Some women preferred to remain on their beds, but as a rule the midwife took the cord of a net used for carrying milk-pots and secured it to a rafter near the door, spreading a carpet of newly gathered grass below it, upon this the woman squatted, holding the rope, while the midwife sat behind her, supporting her, until the child was born. There was seldom any difficulty, and even in a case of cross-birth the women were generally able to force back the child and turn it so as to get correct presentation and save both mother and child. Death during child-birth was almost unknown.

When the child was born the midwife cut the cord with an ordinary knife or a strip of reed from the roof and handed the child to one of the assistants, while she attended to the mother. Among the pastoral people each child was supplied with a nurse who took charge of it from birth. The child was washed with urine from a little girl of some five or six years old, the circlet of seeds which the mother had worn on her head was tied on its wrist and it was wrapped in a bark-cloth. Among the serfs, the child was washed with water and made to drink either milk or plantain-wine out of a cup made from a banana leaf.

Among the agricultural people the after-birth was buried in the doorway without any ceremony. Among the cow-people the woman retired to bed as soon as the after-birth came away, and four small boys or girls whose parents were alive and well were sent to look for and bring to the house leaves of the trees *nyawera*, *kirikiti* and *mulokola muhiri*. A hole was dug in the doorway and these were put in and the placenta laid on them; it was covered with more leaves, and the hole was filled up with earth which was beaten hard. This was said to ensure that the child would grow up strong like the children who performed the ceremony, and that its parents would live, like theirs, to look after it. If a child was still-born the placenta was thrown away.

After the birth, the mother lay on her usual bed, a platform of earth beaten hard with, if possible, a cow-skin to lie on and bark-cloths to cover her. During the next four days care had to be taken that the fire in the hut was kept burning brightly, and no one might take any of it away from the hut, for, if they did, the cord would not drop from the child but remain sticking out during its life. Leaves of the sacred trees *kirikiti* and *mayingo* were put on the fire, which made it sacred and gave it power to purge away evil from the child. If the child was a boy, the father brought one of the logs used for filling up the gateway of the kraal by night and placed it on the fire, he gave the thong (*mboha*), which he used for tying the legs of restive cows during milking, to his mother to use as a waist-belt for his wife. If the child was a girl, ordinary fire-wood was used for the fire and the belt for the mother was of bark-cloth.

For the next eight days the mother had to remain in seclusion. She was not allowed to leave the house by the main door, so a second door was made at the back and a court built round it to ensure privacy for the mother and the midwife. The midwife boiled a kind of grass (*nstemwe*) and used the juice to wash the lower part of the woman's body each day. She also massaged her daily and tightened her belt. On the eighth day the mother was bathed from head

to foot outside the hut in the enclosure, and after that her husband might join her again, and he remained with her all the time she was nursing the child

Among the agricultural people, if the woman was torn in giving birth, a medicine-man was sent for. He might not enter the house, for no man but the husband was allowed to do that. He made his medicine and passed it through a tube in the wall into the house, where it was put in a hole in the ground, which was lined with plantain leaves to make it hold water, or in a stool with a hollowed seat. The woman sat in this and was washed with the medicine. If the child was a boy, a special log was placed on the fire and kept burning for four days and nights and a knife was stuck in the head of the bed to avert evil influences. The stump of cord, when it fell, was thrown on the mother's bed and left there. For ten days the woman remained in seclusion and apart from her husband, who was careful to have no sexual relations with other women during this period. His mother, who acted as midwife, also looked after his requirements. At the end of the ten days the mother smeared herself all over with clay, which was allowed to dry and then rubbed off, and she washed with water and oiled herself before re-joining her husband.

Among the pastoral people, for a month after the birth of a child, no man but the mother's husband was allowed into the house, and both husband and wife had to be careful to have sexual relations with no one but each other. During the first eight days, the mother refrained from touching the milk-pots and from doing any work, and the midwife managed the household arrangements and handed out the milk-pots. When the woman had re-joined her husband, she took up her usual duties, for after eight days she was supposed to have no more need of the midwife's attentions.

When the umbilical cord fell from the child, the mother kept it until the husband was present. He took a calf and bled it, taking only a little blood. This his wife mixed with milk and added to it the cord chopped very small. The mixture was boiled slowly until it formed a cake. A number



Medicine-men. Agricultural class





Medicine-man about to take an augury

of small children, who were in good health and had both parents alive and well, came with a bunch of the purifying herb *enyamwerha*. A pot of fresh water was placed before each child and each dipped the bunch of herbs in the water and sprinkled the baby, saying, "Grow up strong and good." The children then ate the cake containing the cord and went away. In some cases, however, the cord was not used in this way but was stitched into a leather bag which was worn by the mother in her girdle.

A continuation of this ceremony, performed in some instances, is described in *The Northern Bantu*.

After the meal the children sweep out the hut in which the mother has been secluded, the dust they collect and throw on the kraal dung-heap, and to make quite sure that there is no dust or grass left they sweep the hut out four times. While the children are sweeping out the hut, the mother is undergoing a purificatory ceremony. she washes from head to foot and smears her body with a kind of brown clay which has a sweet smell and is reserved for ceremonial uses. The mother discards all her old clothing, her husband provides her with quite new clothes, she returns to her hut to receive her relatives and friends, who by this time have congregated to see her baby and to congratulate her, and the baby is taken and examined by the women.

If a husband was absent from home when a child was born, he brought a bunch of the herb *muhire* to the house. Putting on his shoes and spreading a mat by the side of the bed on which his wife lay, he took the bunch of herbs, urinated on them, and sprinkled his wife on the inner side of her right thigh to drive away any evil which might have been attracted through his absence or any magic which might have been worked on her.

During the first four months of a child's life it was kept lying upon its back and never allowed to touch the ground with the soles of its feet. It was never carried about unless it was necessary to go on a journey, but it lay on a bark-cloth with another for covering.

A mother always nursed her own child for two or three years except when the man was anxious to have another child soon, when the baby was taken away and artificially fed and the nurse was responsible for it. It was, however,

given cow's milk daily in addition to the mother's milk from the day of its birth. This was given to it through the narrow stem end of a bottle-gourd or the end of a cow's horn with a small hole pierced in it. This was called *nkolo*. After the child had finished its meal any milk remaining in the horn was wiped off and smeared upon its navel.

There was no test to prove the legitimacy of a child, for it was impossible to say who was the father, but the husband claimed it.

At the end of four months, among the cow-people, the father took a boy child, and, choosing two cows, brought them before the house and placed him on the back of each in turn. These two animals were thus dedicated to the boy's use and belonged to him. The father then scraped a shallow hole in the floor of the hut, and, putting a bit of bark-cloth in it, he made the child sit in it and gave it the name of one of his ancestors. The ghost of this ancestor became the patron spirit of the child and looked after it, and the child had to act in such a way as to please the ghost.

If the child was a girl, the mother took her at three months old, made her sit in a hole in the floor of the hut, and gave her the name of an ancestor. She then carried the child outside the kraal and told her to look over the plains to the other kraals, for it was from there that her wealth and fortune, that is, her husband, would come.

A child's first teeth were always watched anxiously, for, if they appeared in the upper jaw, it was an ill omen for the parents, and the child was taken away and cared for by some relative until it cast these teeth. If, however, the first teeth appeared in the lower jaw, all was well. Should a father die before his child cut its first teeth, the mother and child left the kraal and lived elsewhere, for they might not be seen by any members of the kraal until the child had cut its teeth, after which they came back.

If the child was a boy, the father, when it cut its first teeth, made a small bow and arrow, leaving a loose end of the string of the bow hanging with a few beads strung on it. The child's

head was then shaved for the first time and the mother and the father's sister, or, as some said, the mother's sister, accompanied by some children, carried the child on a round of visits to relatives and friends, who added more beads to those on the string of the bow. On their return home the beads were made into bracelets and anklets for the child to wear.

In some cases, as described in *The Northern Bantu*, when a female child cut its first teeth, the father placed it to sit on the floor and brought an empty gourd such as was used for churning. The child was made to rock this about as if churning and the mother then stowed it away. When the teeth were cast, they were preserved with this gourd.

The mother then made the girl a little belt with a loose end of string, and, accompanied by her husband's sister, she carried her on a round of visits and received presents of beads which were put on the string of her belt and later were made into ornaments for her wrists and ankles.

When a child cast its first tooth, it was made to take the tooth and throw it towards the setting sun, saying, "Grand-mother, this is bad, give me a good one."

Among the serfs, the ceremony of naming a child was gone through, but a boy was given no cows and was simply put to sit on the floor. Both boys and girls slept on their parents' bed until quite big, when the boys were given a bed near the fire and the girls slept in a secluded place at the head of the parents' bed.

Among cow-people, if a child was slow in learning to walk, the parents took it to the Mugabe who, taking his stick, tapped it gently, saying, "I drive you from the country." The child would then walk in a few days. If it was slow in learning to talk, a bird, *kanyonza*, which was noted for chattering and was said to be almost able to talk, was caught and the child's tongue made to touch that of the bird, after which the child would speak in a few days.

A girl was often bespoken in marriage at one or two years of age either by a man who wanted her himself or by one who wanted a wife for his son, who might also be only a child.

When the parents consented to the engagement, the man lent them two cows for the child's food. The milk from these, however, was not reserved for her use alone but her father and others might drink of it. As the prospective husband grew up he was expected to make periodical visits to the girl's parents with small presents but he never saw the girl, and he might never take tobacco, for such a gift would cause his prospective wife to be barren.

During the first six or seven years of their lives, boys and girls played together. They were taught to guard the calves which roamed near the kraal and they played together while thus engaged. They had games of warfare, marriage, herding, building and so on, and they, as well as their elders, were fond of wrestling, shooting at a mark with arrows, and spear-throwing. Neither boys nor girls wore any clothing during their early years and their food was milk, of which they were expected to drink large quantities and they were punished if they refused to take what was considered enough. The milk for the children might be set aside and drunk at any time during the day, whereas older people drank it while it was warm or soon after the milking.

At about seven years of age a boy was expected to be useful in the kraal, and about eight he began to go out with the men who took the cattle to pasture. He had to learn to herd the cows, to milk them and to treat their various ailments. This necessitated knowing the different kinds of herbs, their preparation and their use. He had also to learn to protect the cows from wild beasts, especially lions, of which herdsmen, however, seem to have had no fear, merely driving them off with spears or even with their staffs.

A boy underwent no ceremony at puberty, but he was expected to be able to support himself and to obtain a wife without asking for much help. Among the poorer class he was also expected to be able to support his parents in their old age and to take his part in any family feuds and quarrels.

At about the age of eight a girl began to prepare for marriage. She was no longer allowed to play and run about unrestrained, but was kept in the house and made to drink

large quantities of milk daily in order to grow fat. Her mother had to teach her to wash milk-pots, to churn and to prepare food, and she would occupy some of her time in making bead-ornaments and weaving the wicker lids for the milk-pots. The rest of her time was spent in sitting about, talking, sleeping, and drinking milk.

When a girl had her first menses, her mother kept the fact secret, if possible, even from her husband. The girl was not allowed to drink milk from the ordinary cows, but the mother, if she could do so, would give her milk from a cow that was past bearing. If a woman during her menses drank milk from a young cow, it would sicken and the milk dry up, and it would probably become barren. A woman who neglected this taboo was said to be stealing her food. The mother concealed the condition of her daughter in order that she might not be taken at once in marriage or be led astray by some other man, for it was a very serious matter for a girl to bear a child before marriage and the mother was responsible for her virtue.

Twins were not welcomed as they were in some of the neighbouring tribes, but they were not treated unkindly. No ceremonies attended their birth except among the members of the Batwa clan whose totem was twins, and they had no more honour given to them than any other child. The procedure in the Batwa clan is described in *The Northern Bantu* as follows

The mother and her children are taken to her parents' home and she remains there until the children have cut their first two teeth and the father has performed the ceremony of moving from the old home and building a new kraal. The husband brings his wife and children to their new home and she goes about her duties as before.

Women sometimes became mentally deranged when pregnant, and this was attributed by the women-doctors to some ghost. A medicine-man was summoned to discover by augury what ghost was causing the trouble, and the treatment in such a case differed from that of an ordinary ghost-possessed person. A hut was built at a little distance from the woman's home and she was taken to live there. Her mother-in-law stayed with her and guarded her and tended her with special

care, for it was feared that the ghost would injure the family in some way should they neglect the mother. The child, when born, was called the child of the ghost, and particular care was taken of it lest the ghost should not be satisfied with its progress and should afflict the family.

When several children of a woman died in infancy, the next born was often taken away and nursed where the parents did not see it until it was grown up, though they were kept informed of its progress. Sometimes the medicine-man was called in and given a male sheep or goat. He killed the animal and made the scrotum into a bag, filling it with herbs and roots, over which he pronounced incantations. This was fastened up and used as an amulet for the child to wear to keep it from suffering the fate of its brothers and sisters. Many amulets of bits of wood and herbs were tied on the necks, wrists and ankles to keep children from harm.

When a child died at birth, the mother was given special medicine to make her bear a healthy child the next time. When a mother died after giving birth, the baby was reared on cow's milk or by a foster-mother.

If a woman had only girl children she was given medicine to make her have a son, and, if this failed, her husband might divorce her; but, even if he married again and had children by his second wife, he might not arrange the marriages of the daughters of his first wife without calling her in to take part in the arrangements and ceremonies. She herself might by that time be married again, but her husband could not object to her returning and living as the wife of her former husband during this time.

If a man and his wife had a quarrel during the time she was nursing a child and she went away in anger, leaving the child with its nurse, she might not return to the house until her husband brought one of the logs for filling up the kraal gateway and placed it in front of the door. She had to sit on this and suckle the child before she might step over it and enter the house.

## CHAPTER XI

### MARRIAGE

Marriage among the cow-people—clans not entirely exogamous—preparing a girl for marriage—chastity and punishment for fornication—methods of inducing abortion—polygamy and divorce—adoption—polyandry—morality after marriage—arranging marriages—the marriage-fee—washing in the new moon—going for the bride—capturing the bride—first part of the compact—drinking milk—feasting—the staff of peace—another form of marriage ceremony—tug-of-war—marriage consummated at the bride's home—going to her new home—reception by the bridegroom's parents—a young wife remains at home—rules of consanguinity—agricultural marriage—pre-marriage chastity and post-marriage freedom—elder sister must be married first—the marriage-fee—preparing the bride—fetching the bride—leaving the bride's home—reception at the bridegroom's home—consummation of the marriage—three months' seclusion—visiting the bride's parents

THE marriage customs of the pastoral people of Ankole differed from those of many of the surrounding tribes in that they were not entirely exogamous. They had no rule to prevent members of different sub-divisions of the same great clan from intermarrying. A man might marry a woman whose primary totem was the same as his own, provided that her second or even a third totem differed. Thus the royal clan, *Abahinda*, had as totem *nkima*, a monkey with a black face (*colobus*?), and millet (*bulo*) uncooked and unhusked. They might not marry into divisions of the clan which retained only these two totems, but they might marry into such divisions as the *Abasonga* which had a third totem, *kozi*, a black cow. The members of the three great clans of the tribe, the *Abahinda*, *Abasambo* and *Abagahie*, might intermarry without further enquiry, but within the clans marriage between members of the sub-divisions was forbidden unless they differed in at least one totem.



The preparation of a girl for marriage started about the age of eight or nine, as judged from her appearance, for years, being never remembered or counted, formed no guide. From that time she was most carefully watched over by her parents, especially the mother, and kept from all contact with men. She had to live a sedentary life, drinking large quantities of milk and eating beef and, at times, millet-porridge. The mother was responsible for the conduct of her daughter, and if she left home for a visit would take the girl with her, unless some trustworthy person could be left in charge of her at home. By the end of a year of this confinement, the girl would lose all desire for any form of activity and even lose the power of walking, so that she could only waddle. The fatter she grew the more beautiful she was considered, and her condition was a pronounced contrast to that of the men, who were athletic and well-developed.

It was a very serious matter for a girl to bear a child before marriage and it seldom happened, for several reasons. Marriages were generally very early and as a rule the girl was married before sexual desires had developed any strength. Then, too, a girl was carefully guarded and seldom left home, so that it was not easy for a man to approach her. The penalty inflicted for such offences, moreover, was so severe as to deter both men and women from their commission.

Of later years more lenient methods have come into use, but at one time a girl of the better class who went wrong was taken to the river Kagera, a stone was tied to her neck, with a bundle of the herbs *elimbwe*, *busa*, *ereme* and *bitezo*, and she was cast into the river and drowned. The man, if caught, suffered in the same way. Should the Mugabe or a prince marry a girl and find that she was with child, the girl would be drowned and messengers would be sent to kill with spears her parents and as many of her clan as could be found. A girl who had gone wrong and was being taken away for trial or punishment was never allowed to pass out of the kraal by the main gate but had to go through a gap broken in the kraal-fence at the back. This treatment, besides increasing

her shame and furnishing an example to the rest of the community, removed the danger of harm to the cattle.

When more lenient methods were employed, the girl was driven from the kraal to find asylum where she could. If the man consented to marry her, he took her to his own house until the child was born, after which he paid the usual marriage-fee and she became his legal wife. If, however, he refused to take her, she generally wandered to the agricultural people, who might take her in. She might marry one of their men and live an outcast from her tribe, eating the food and doing the work of the despised serfs. In some cases, a poor herdsman, who could not afford to pay a marriage-fee for a wife, would take such a woman, but more often she would simply take refuge among the agricultural people and, after the child was born, would pass from man to man. Unless she married a man of the pastoral tribe she might never return to her own home until the child was grown up. Should it be a girl, its grandparents might then take it and would permit the mother to return.

A girl who had erred and found herself pregnant would often seek her mother's assistance and attempt to bring on abortion. There were several methods of doing this. A bark-cloth was spread over a large frame as if for fumigating it and the girl went under the frame where a spot of hot embers, with a herb *migege* burning on it, was put. The smoke brought on sickness and invariably led to abortion in a short time. Another method might be applied by the girl herself. She inserted into her vagina the juice of the herb *kutezo* or *musongyesongye*, and repeated this several times in quick succession until it brought about abortion. Another method was to drink the juice of the leaves of a herb *omuwoko* mixed with water. This brought on violent vomiting and soon produced the desired effect. The mother was the only person in whom the girl confided, and she nursed the girl during the subsequent illness and concealed her true condition. Methods of a magical nature were sometimes adopted by an unmarried girl, who had gone wrong, to prevent conception, she might

urinate into a hole in an ant-hill or take the spear of a visitor in the house and, removing the blade, urinate into the socket and replace the blade.

Monogamy was customary, though polygamy was permissible, and the Mugabe and wealthy men often had many wives. In most cases, however, a man would only marry a second wife if his first wife turned out to be sterile. In such a case the man had to decide whether he would divorce his first wife and send her back to her people or whether, if he could afford it, he would keep both wives. Frequently a wife, who found herself to be sterile, encouraged her husband to marry again. If the man divorced his first wife he lost the marriage-fee which he had paid for her, for it was not usual to return it under these conditions. She, however, might remarry, if she wished, or she might remain unmarried with her people. Very often a divorced woman went to live as the wife of some person who could not afford to pay the marriage-fee for a wife; if she bore him a son, he had to pay her relations the marriage-fee to legalise the marriage before his son might inherit his property, for otherwise it would go to his brother or some other member of the clan. In such a case the parents got two marriage-fees for their daughter. If, however, a man could afford to keep two wives they lived in the same kraal, but he built a new house for the second wife. Should the first wife later bear a son, he inherited before any son of the second wife, even if he was younger. If the first wife bore only daughters, the son of the second wife was the heir, but his half-sister had to assist his own sister, if he had any, in performing the purificatory rites of inheritance, when she also took possession of cows or something else from the father's property. A man might even marry a third wife if his second wife was also barren, and in this case the barren wives generally lived together and the wife with children had a house to herself. The first wife retained the duty of looking after the milk-pots for the family and setting apart the milk for the ghosts.

Sometimes a man would not wish to take a second wife and he would adopt a boy, the son of a clan-brother, if possible



Pastoral (*Muhuma*) girl, twelve years old, being prepared for marriage



*Bahuma* women and child

a near relative. If the father of the boy consented, the man would take him home and, without any ceremony, the child was accepted as a son and was looked upon as the eldest son and heir of the adoptive father, even if other sons were born to him later. Sometimes a kind of ceremony was gone through at the adoption of such a boy. The barren wife squatted down as though about to bear a child, the boy was placed between her legs, and the husband handed her a thong used to bind the legs of a restive cow when being milked, this she tied round her waist as was done after birth. She told the boy that he was her son and her husband, holding his lower lip, puffed some saliva over the child and took the oath, "You are my own child till death."

In the case of poor herdsmen, a man might have a sufficient number of cows to pay the marriage-fee but not enough to feed his wife afterwards. In that case, he would hire himself out as herdsman to some wealthy cow-owner who would supply him with cows to herd for him. The herdsman would then pay his own cows as the marriage-fee for his bride and become entirely dependent upon his employer for food for himself, his wife and his family. Another course sometimes taken by poor herdsmen was for two or more clan-brothers to pool their cows and share a wife. The eldest went through the marriage ceremony and the children were looked on as his, but all shared the wife and helped to feed and clothe her.

Though before marriage a girl was most strictly guarded and kept from any contact with men, after marriage it was accepted as an essential part of the entertainment of a visitor that he should sleep in the same bed as his host and his wife and have the use of the wife. If the visitor was the husband's father, the husband left the bed and his wife entirely to him and went to sleep with a neighbour who would share his bed and wife with him as long as the father was there. When, however, a man visited a friend whose wife was the visitor's sister, his mother's sister, or his mother's sister's daughter, the visitor slept on another bed. Even unmarried boys were allowed this right as soon as they became of an age for sexual

intercourse, and when a boy visited his married brother he had the use of the wife, who might unveil in his presence. A woman never paid visits except to her father or her own near relatives.

It was usual for parents to arrange for the marriage of their children when they were quite small, and an infant girl might be betrothed to a boy one or two years' old. The father of the boy made the arrangements with the girl's parents and, if they were agreeable, he gave them one or two cows for her use. These were not part of the marriage-fee and the milk from them was not reserved for the girl alone, but her father, if he had other cows to feed her, might drink it or give it away. During his childhood and youth the boy had to pay periodical visits to his prospective parents-in-law, taking small presents of beer, butter, or bark-cloths. He might never take tobacco, for such a present would cause his bride to be barren. He never saw the girl on these visits, nor indeed did he meet her until the day of marriage. The girl herself had no voice in the arrangements, though any other members of the clan might protest if they were not pleased<sup>1</sup>.

When the girl was old enough to be married, the bridegroom went to visit her parents, taking with him two pots of beer. The father called in the members of the clan to drink the beer and help to settle the amount of the marriage-fee. This varied, according to circumstances, from twenty cows to two in the case of a poor man. The parents of the bride took possession of the cows and they were expected to give something to the maternal grandmother<sup>2</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> *Northern Bantu*, p. 119. "Before marriage a girl does not cut her hair, nor is she permitted to wear any ornament on her waist or legs. As her hair grows beads and cowry-shells are worked into it and are a token that she is unmarried."

This custom was evidently more universally observed in earlier days than it is now when some girls wear the straw veil and most have their heads shaved.

<sup>2</sup> *Northern Bantu*, p. 119. "Among the lower classes of pastoral people there are many parents who are unable to betroth their sons in infancy, these grow up to manhood and obtain the necessary means for marriage as best they can. When a young betrothed couple grow up to maturity and

In the past it sometimes happened that a girl who had been betrothed would be desired by some prince. If so, he simply sent for the girl and married her, paying the usual amount to the parents and compensating the man who had hoped to marry her. In later days, princes generally married the daughters of neighbouring rulers who could claim royal blood.

When the marriage-fee had been paid, the man was told to come for his bride at the appearance of the new moon. When the time had come, he fastened a pot of water on the roof of his house where the moon shone upon it, and awaited the final summons. When the call came, he washed with the water, which he said was the moon, and went to fetch the bride. No marriage could take place during the waning of the moon and placing the water was the sign that the new moon was visible. Should there be any hitch in the arrangements, the water was taken into the house and kept there as a sign that the promised time was past.

When the appointed day came, the bridegroom, with some companions, went to the kraal of the bride's father, arranging their arrival to correspond with the return of the cattle from pasture. They squatted down with the men of the kraal and drank beer until about ten o'clock, when they were taken to the house and squatted on the floor near the fire, either next the door or on the inner side of the hut near the bed. The bride, who had fasted all day, was inside the hut in a separate compartment with some companions who wept and wailed. Some of her family then heaped dry grass on the fire until it blazed up and endangered the house, whereupon the bridegroom's party remonstrated, asking if it was their intention to burn them to death. They beat down the fire, promising to add another cow to the marriage-fee, and a little fire was allowed to burn while they sat round drinking beer until about two in the morning.

the youth wishes to marry, he brings his future father-in-law a milch cow and a heifer. This gift confirms the first promise made by the parents on his behalf and gives the girl's parents to understand that he means to hold to the early promise made for him "

In all cases the beer had to be given as part of the marriage settlement.



The bride's relations asked for the man who had come to marry their daughter, and he stood up with one of his friends and declared himself to be the man. The noise of weeping and wailing which had gone on steadily in the bride's chamber increased in volume at this, and the friends closed round the bride to protect her. The bridegroom stepped on his father-in-law's bed and the father-in-law's sister took him by the right wrist and led him to where the bride and her companions were. Her friends strove to prevent him from reaching her and his friends joined in the struggle which then took place. The girls scratched at the faces and arms of the men, causing blood to flow, and the fight sometimes became quite serious. At length the bride's aunt remonstrated with them and separated them, restoring peace and order, and the girls agreed to give up the bride.

The bride's aunt took the left hand of the bridegroom and placed it on the inside of the bride's thigh, saying, "This is your wife." The bridegroom passed a little urine into his hand and rubbed it on the thigh where his left hand had been and this was the first part of the compact between them. This part of the ceremony had to be finished before jackals began to call on the hills or there would be no children from the marriage.

The bridegroom then returned to his companions near the fire, and they continued to drink until about four o'clock when he was conducted to a small hut outside the kraal near the gate. The bride was also brought there and sat in front of the bridegroom. A cow that had one or two calves alive and well was milked and the bridegroom took a mouthful of the milk and puffed it over the bride, who then took a mouthful and puffed it over him. A relative of the bridegroom, a boy whose parents were alive and well, was chosen to drink any milk that was left over. He was called *Mwana wa chora*, and in some cases he afterwards slept with the bride and bridegroom for a few nights to ensure that the bride would bear healthy children.

The rest of that day was spent in feasting and merry-making. The bride's father killed a bull, which was cut up,

cooked, and eaten outside the kraal by the men who danced there, while the women sat inside the kraal and played their harps and sang.

In the evening, the bridegroom returned to his bride in her father's house and slept there. When entering, he carried a branch of a tree, *munayafu* or *mulokola*, the kinds which were used for driving cows this he gave to his father-in-law, who put it in the roof of the house, where it remained until the couple were settled in their own home when it was taken down and burned in the house. It was an emblem of peace and happiness, warding off evil and causing the wife to have children. It might not be taken out of the house or thrown away but had to be burned there, or their happiness would be destroyed.

During the first two or three nights someone always lay with the bride and bridegroom, who slept near the fire. In some cases it was the bride's aunt, in others her young brother, and in others the relative of the bridegroom who had drunk the milk.

In some clans this marriage ceremony differed in certain respects. On the day appointed the bride's father prepared a feast for the bridegroom and his companions and the men of the kraal, and this might last two days. On the second day the young men of the kraal (clan-brothers of the bride) came to the house and asked for their sister in order to give her to her husband, but her father's sister and her girl friends refused to give her up. They tied a rope to her leg and held on to one end, giving the other to the men outside, who pulled and overcame them. The bride was hurried to a place where a party awaited her with a litter, often only a cow-skin, into which she was put and carried away, followed by a party of friends, to the hut where her husband was. There a pot of milk was brought and each puffed milk over the other. When these ceremonies ended, the bride went back to her father's house, where her husband joined her and they slept on the floor by the fire. The bride's father's sister lay with them and the marriage was consummated. On the following day the bride was taken to her new home.

If a boy was married while still too young to complete the marriage, his father took his place with the bride by night and she might not refuse his advances.

The couple might remain two or three days in the bride's home before leaving. The length of their stay depended upon their own desires and the way in which they were treated. When they left, they timed their departure to arrive at the kraal of the bridegroom's father as the cows returned from pasture. The bride and her aunt (her father's sister, who was known as *Isenkazi*) were carried in litters by friends of the bridegroom. The bride's brother also accompanied her. In accordance with the custom of women, the bride was closely veiled when she travelled.

At the gate of the kraal the bride was given a little millet (*bulu*) in each hand as she stepped from the litter, and she scattered this as she walked across the kraal to the hut. As she entered the hut she was handed a gourd such as women used for churning (*ekusabo*), as a sign that she was a mistress in the place and had the right to churn.

In the house the bridegroom's father and mother were seated on the bed and the bride's aunt led her up to them and seated her in the lap first of her father-in-law and then of her mother-in-law. When they had embraced her, she was put to rest on the bed before she was allowed to do anything, because the journey was supposed to have tired her. The young couple lived in the house of the bridegroom's parents until the first child was born, when they moved into their own house. If, however, the man had already a home of his own, he would stay a short time, at most two months, in his father's kraal and then move to his own home.

The girl's father always gave his daughter ornaments and a complete set of milk-pots, churn and butter-pots when she got married, and the bridegroom's father built a house for them. If the bridegroom's father was dead, he built his own house before he got married. The bride's father usually gave his son-in-law a present of some of the cows from the marriage-fee.

In some cases the bride was taken to her home on the day her husband went for her. A feast was made at her father's kraal in the earlier part of the day and she was afterwards taken to her new home. If a girl was very young, she remained with her mother and the husband came and lived there. An extension was made to the parents' house to form a separate room for them, but the husband had to pass through the house to reach it and the bride's mother could enter it at any time.

The children of brothers and sisters were forbidden to marry, but the next generation might intermarry. A man might never marry into the clan of his father, for that was his own clan, and he was also forbidden to marry into the clan of his mother or of any of his grandparents, but he might marry into the clan of his grandfather's mother.

#### AGRICULTURAL MARRIAGE CEREMONIES

Though the serfs in Ankole were more numerous than the cow-people, they seldom seemed to have large families; possibly the custom by which a woman had sexual relations with large numbers of men had an effect in limiting the number of her children. Most of the agricultural customs were either borrowed from or identical with those of the cow-people, though there were differences.

In the same way as among the cow-people, the chastity of a girl before marriage was the object of the greatest care, and if a girl went wrong she was driven from home and utterly disowned by her parents. If she married after being expelled from home, though they might hear of it, they asked for no marriage-fee. If, however, she had a daughter who was the fruit of the first irregularity, and this daughter was betrothed, the mother's parents might claim a marriage-fee for her.

Once a girl was married, on the other hand, both husband and wife enjoyed the greatest possible sexual freedom. The wife might allow any man she pleased to come to her bed and the husband consorted with any woman he desired. The man

claimed the woman he married as his wife and any children she bore were said to be his, but it by no means followed that he was their father.

No younger daughter might be married while there was an elder sister still unmarried, and if any man wished to marry the younger daughter, he had to wait. If the elder sister had some deformity or defect which prevented her being married, she was given the dress of a married woman, and after that the younger sister might be married. The elder sister might then allow any man to come to her bed, but, if she bore a child, the father of it had either to marry her or pay a fine.

When a youth made up his mind that he wished to marry, he asked a friend to go for him to the girl's parents and tell them of his wish. If they consented to the marriage, they sent for the youth, who came, bringing with him a pot of beer. He arranged for another pot to be brought while they were drinking this, and they sat round and discussed the marriage-fee. A few relatives were called in by the parents for this discussion, the chief persons concerned being the father and his brother. The usual amount demanded for a marriage-fee was a cow-calf and a young bull, but, should the youth be unable to procure these, he was asked for fourteen goats, which were divided thus: seven for the father, three for his brother, two for the mother's brother, one for the father's sister, and one for a younger brother of the father. When this matter was settled the tube through which the beer had been drunk by the bride's father at this meeting was put in the roof of the hut as a sign that the marriage agreement had been made.

After the marriage-fee had been paid, the bridegroom had to wait, probably for some weeks, until the bride was made ready for marriage. Sometimes a poor man was given one or even two years to procure the marriage-fee, and during the time of waiting the bride made a large basket of four colours, in which she collected food for her husband. When the fee had been paid, the bride's father told the bridegroom

to prepare beer and be ready when the new moon appeared. The father obtained a cow-hide dress, a bark-cloth, amulets, anklets, bracelets and necklets for his daughter. The bride's nails were cut on hands and feet and her hair was all shaved off, except that on the pubes, which was pulled out by her mother, a very painful process which took several days to complete.

When all was ready, the father sent for the bridegroom, who came and kissed the palms of both his hands. The father then brought out a large pot of beer with four tubes and he, his brother, the bridegroom, and the bridegroom's friend, drank beer at the same time from the one pot. After them other friends drank and the pot was refilled and all drank again.

The bridegroom then returned home and made a feast with about twenty or thirty friends, who danced there all night. In the morning two goats were brought; one was taken to the shrine of the bridegroom's grandfather and either killed there or taken back and killed at the door of the hut by having a knife run into its heart so that it bled internally. They ate the flesh of this animal and then the bridegroom's friends started to fetch the bride, taking one goat with them, the bridegroom remaining at home. A small boy whose parents were alive and well had to accompany the party and bear a spear before them.

On their arrival at the bride's father's kraal, the friend who was specially chosen to represent the bridegroom went into the hut where the father and mother awaited him with the bride; they took their daughter on their laps in turn and took leave of her. The father then took her by the hand and presented her to the man who was to take her, who thereupon went out to summon the bearers to carry her. Meanwhile another brother of the bridegroom climbed upon the roof of the hut and stuck a spear through the thatch. The bride touched the spear with her tongue and then the tube through which the betrothal beer had been drunk was substituted for the spear, and water was allowed to trickle into the bride's mouth to prevent witchcraft being used against her.

When the bridegroom's representative came back with the bearers, the bride's friends surrounded her and a fierce struggle took place, for they refused to let her go and fought until they were overcome. They scratched and bit and the bride clung to the posts of the hut and refused to enter the litter. When at last she was put in the litter, her brother came and tied a fetish of pig-skin on her ankle as a charm against witchcraft. She was veiled with a cow-skin and took with her a mat (*kirago*). With her went three men and a girl, if possible brothers and a sister, and some girl friends. This struggle is to-day but rough play, representing what was doubtless at one time a real fight to defend a girl from capture.

When the bride arrived, the father and mother-in-law received her sitting on the edge of their bed and she sat in the lap first of one and then of the other. The bride and bridegroom then sat upon the mat she had brought and a little grain (*bulo*) was handed to them. The bridegroom first puffed a little over the bride and she puffed a little over him. A pot with water was put on the fire and, together, the couple sprinkled some millet-flour in the water and, holding on to the same stick, they stirred the porridge and made a little meal of it.

The people who accompanied the bride remained outside and were supplied with beer and food. They all went into the house to greet the bride, and the men afterwards retired outside to dance during the night, while the girls remained and drank beer with the bride.

At about ten o'clock the bride and bridegroom retired to bed, where a young brother of the bridegroom slept on one side and a young sister of the bride on the other, the newly-married couple being between them. The marriage was not consummated until the second night, and should a man find that the girl was not a virgin, he sent as a sign to her parents a hoe-handle with a hole cut in it for the insertion of the iron blade. Should the bridegroom, as was sometimes the case, be too young to consummate the marriage, his father took the bride as his wife until the real husband was old enough to do so.

On the third day some of the bride's relatives came bringing the large basket she had made filled with millet, and also ten to twenty small baskets of food, a bunch of plantains and a pot of plantain-wine. The husband drank first from the pot and then his wife and after her the guests. The girl sister of the bride was given a hoe, and a goat was given to the other guests, who then returned home.

For the next three months the bride remained in seclusion in her own house and took care that the fire did not go out. At the end of this time the husband made a feast, and she came out. The man and wife, accompanied by his brother and her sister, who remained with her until this time, went to visit her parents, who killed a goat and made a feast for them. The tube through which the betrothal beer had been drunk was taken from the roof, and the husband, the wife, and her father and mother drank beer through it. The bride's mother then broke it in pieces and put it in the basket in which she stored her treasures. When the daughter's first child was born, she made a necklet of the bits and put it on the child's neck.



## CHAPTER XII

### ILLNESS

Causes assigned to illness—gods, ghosts, and magic—methods of working magic—methods used by diviners—treatment of illness caused by a god, by magic, by a family ghost, by a hostile ghost—methods of medicine-men—treatment of child with swelled spleen—bleeding and blistering—small-pox—venereal disease—bubonic plague—coughs and pains in the back

IT was seldom that people assigned any natural cause to illness, but there were times when it was evident that no supernatural cause need be looked for. Old age was regarded as sufficient reason for serious illness, for they thought that the gods called away old people who had fulfilled their allotted time upon earth. They acknowledged, too, that fever might be contracted by eating too freely of beef from a cow that had died of some disease, or by going out in the sun when it was too hot. In most cases, however, illness was attributed to the agency of some god or ghost, or to magic.

Though it was not often that illness could be ascribed to a god, there were occasions when, in consequence of some neglect of his rights and desires or the appropriation for other purposes of cows which had been dedicated to him, a god would attack the guilty person with illness.

A far more common cause of illness was the anger of some ghost, which might be roused by any of a multitude of causes. Some of the cows which had been dedicated to a family or clan ghost might have been sold or exchanged without its sanction; offerings or observances which it considered as its due might have been neglected; it might feel a desire for meat; some of its family might have been ill-used or might have committed some crime against the clan-laws, such as marriage within the forbidden degrees or some immoral action which required punishment; or on the other hand a ghost from a hostile clan might be sent by a member of that clan to attack and harm someone.

Magic was another common cause of illness, for any person who had a grudge against another had not much difficulty in finding means of working magic against him. Sometimes a man would find some method of conveying enchanted beer, over which he had performed magical rites, to his enemy. He would carry the beer to some place where he would not be recognised and there he would hire some unsuspecting person to take it to his enemy. He would give a false name to the bearer, saying that the beer was a present from some other man who was a friend of his intended victim, and the unsuspecting recipient would drink it and fall ill. At once he realised that not only was the beer from an enemy but that magic had been used over it, and he would give up hope of recovery, so that unless the author of the mischief could be discovered and persuaded to raise the spell, the victim would certainly die of fear, though from the enchanted beer alone he might easily recover.

The magic-worker might also blow a spell on to his enemy or insert some magic herb amongst the tobacco in his pipe and get the other to smoke it. If he could obtain a shred of his enemy's garment, a little hair, spittle, grass that had been in his mouth, earth on which he had stepped, tobacco dust from his pipe, or anything that had been in contact with him, he would take it to a medicine-man who would work magic with it and cause the owner to fall ill. The medicine-men were able to work spells and make medicine to kill a man even at a distance. Sometimes the magician worked against a whole family by secreting some charm in his enemy's house or putting a bone, if possible that of some dead person, over which he pronounced spells, in the thatch of the house or hiding it in the path where the inmates would certainly step over it. The magic would affect all the members of the family but more especially any person against whom it was definitely directed, and nothing would remove the effects until the object was discovered and taken away.

When a man fell ill, it was the duty of his wife to look after him and to inform his relatives of the matter. If it seemed to

be some slight ailment, she would doctor him herself and resort to blistering or bleeding, or treat him with herbs. If matters got beyond her skill, the first thing to be done was to call in a medicine-man or diviner to discover the cause of the illness. Among the wealthy classes the diviner summoned was always one who did his work with some fowl or animal or with the insect *ntondo* and two sticks in the manner already described. A preliminary fee of a cow-skin, a goat, a sheep, or something of less value was paid to him, and when he came he was given a fowl which he killed to examine the intestines. Should he find small specks upon these, he pronounced the case hopeless and proceeded to determine the length of time the patient had to live. This he told by examining the specks on the lungs, inserting a finger to stretch them and counting the markings. Instead of this he might give an emetic or draw a little blood from the chest of the patient and, by an examination of the contents of the stomach or of the blood, he would determine the cause and nature of the illness. By these means he also told who should be summoned to treat the patient, for the diviners themselves never undertook any treatment.

The poorer classes sent for another kind of diviner who did not work with animals but with seeds, stones, or sticks. One would use a pot of water and six, twelve, or fourteen bits of stick. He first made a noise over the sticks as if spitting on them and stated his desire to them, saying, "Tell me what is the cause of the illness; is it the ghost of so-and-so?" or, "Is it magic worked by so-and-so?" He then cast the sticks into the pot and from their position he was able to tell which was the true cause and to decide who could treat the case, for these diviners, like their superiors, never treated cases themselves.

Another diviner of this class used a cup of millet (*bulu*) and six, twelve, or fourteen bits of stone or lumps of mud. He made a noise as if spitting on the cup of millet and asked the question to which he wanted an answer. He then threw the millet from the cup with the bits of stone or mud and watched

their position as they fell on a piece of skin which he had spread for the purpose. This told him the cause of the illness.

When the cause of the illness had thus been settled, the diviner told the patient's friends whom they must call in to carry out the necessary treatment. There were women-doctors (*Omusuzi*) who dealt entirely with women while the men-doctors (*Bafumu*) dealt with both men and women.

If, however, the cause of the illness was found to be the action of some god, the priests of that god were called in and they informed the relatives what offering must be made to propitiate the god, who generally demanded a number of cows. When the god Kagoro attacked a man, the diviner ordered that the priest who represented him should be sent for. This was the same man who was sent for in the case of sickness among the cows in a kraal, and he came with his spears, dancing and pointing them at the house. After dancing round, he entered the house, and holding the man by the knees he smeared him with butter. He then gave him a mixture of the herbs *olugahramwe*, *choza*, *hom*, *omugosora*, *omuisya* and *ereka*, and pronounced incantations over him. He waited for about a week until the man was well again, and during this time he had to be kept supplied with milk or beer, and beef. When he left he was given a cow and a bark-cloth.

Should the case be ascribed to the working of magic, a fee of a calf-skin was sent to the medicine-man who was asked to treat the case. When he came to the place he usually demanded that a bull or a cow should be killed, and he made a meal of the meat before he started work. In some cases he gave his patient an emetic and a purgative to cleanse him from the spell, and then went on to treat the symptoms with herb-medicines. Should the patient recover, he had to pay the medicine-man a calf, but, if he died, the relatives did not pay anything further. A more elaborate cleansing might, however, be necessary, and in this case, a bull was brought to the medicine-man, who killed it by cutting its throat. He had a bunch of herbs which he dipped in the blood as it flowed

from the bull and with this he smeared the sick man's forehead, chest, arms, and legs. The family, who had gathered beside the sick man, the hut with all its contents, the cattle, the kraal, and especially the gate of the kraal and the door and door-posts of the house, were also sprinkled with the blood, and the bunch of herbs was cast on to waste ground, after which the man was expected to recover.

Another method of dealing with magic was to attach it to some animal or fowl. The medicine-man came, and, taking a bunch of herbs, passed them round the house to sweep up evil influences, he then tied the bunch to a fowl, which he buried alive. Should this prove insufficient to remove the magic, a goat or a sheep would be used and treated in the same way. The fee paid to this man might be a calf, a goat, a pot of beer, or a new hoe.

Illness caused by a ghost required more careful treatment. Such a ghost was either that of some person of another clan or of some relative, but never that of a father, for a father's ghost was always good and might never be driven away. The ghost of a man's father might forbid any other man to sleep on the bed with the man's wife and the guest who did so would feel a sense of suffocation or of being strangled and would have to leave the bed. The woman whose husband's father's ghost acted in this way would warn guests and give them some other place in which to sleep, for they might not sleep in her bed as was the usual custom.

Again, the ghost of a man's deceased wife might forbid the husband to marry again; should he disobey, his new wife would fall ill, and, unless she was properly treated, would die. She had to apply to a medicine-man who would find out whether offerings would propitiate the spirit and see that they were properly made. If the man also fell ill, a fowl was killed, dried, and divided into two pieces. The pieces were made up into fetishes and worn by the man and the woman. If, however, the ghost refused to be satisfied, the new wife might not remain in the house of her husband but had to go back to her parents.



Medicine-men preparing to exorcise a ghost from a sick man



Medicine-men exorcising a ghost from a sick man

When a ghost had to be forcibly removed from a patient the diviner told the relatives what medicine-man to send for and what preparations to make. A goat of a particular colour, always either black or black and white, was tied to the head of the patient's bed during the night so that the ghost might pass from the patient into it. The medicine-man came in the morning, dancing and singing, and passed a bunch of sticks and herbs all round the house to sweep together all the evil influences into one place. He put the sticks at the head of the bed or outside the door and proceeded to kill the goat, which had been tied to the bed and which was now supposed to contain the ghost. He sprinkled some of the blood on the bed, the patient, and his family. A fowl was brought and passed round the body of the goat so that the ghost passed from the goat into it, and it was buried alive in the gateway through which the cows entered the kraal, thus preventing the ghost from returning. The head of the goat was then cut off; the sticks with which the evil in the house had been swept up and sometimes also some fetishes, which had been hung up round the house, were tied to it and it was buried by the side of the man's bed so that he stepped upon it when getting into or out of the bed. The patient was then treated for the illness with herbs and drugs until he recovered, and if at any future time he dreamed an unpleasant dream, he rose from the bed and spat upon the place where the goat's head was buried which removed any evil influence which was acting upon him. The flesh of the goat was taken by the medicine-man, who was also paid a calf for this work.

Two old medicine-men of Egara went through their healing performance for my information, using a stuffed otter-skin for a patient. It was plain that they were quite convinced that their work was effectual in driving the ghost out. These medicine-men belonged to the agricultural class but attended both pastoral and agricultural people. Some of them wore bark-cloth robes decorated with beads while others wore skins round the loins and over the shoulders, and in all cases they wore special head-dresses. These were either bands of



leather with eagle-feathers sticking up from them or tall caps consisting of strips of leather some ten inches deep on which were stitched cowry-shells, beads, feathers and sometimes the claws of birds and beasts. The bag in which the medicine-man carried all his materials for work was the skin of some animal, jackal or wild cat or, more usually, badger or otter. When skinning the animal, an opening was made at the anus, just large enough to remove the bones without damaging the skin. This hole formed the mouth of the bag, which was stuffed with a collection of instruments and drugs. The instruments usually consisted of knives of different sizes for surgical purposes, horns for cupping when bleeding was necessary, blistering irons, and gourd-cups for mixing the drugs. The other contents of the bag were herbs, roots, shells, birds' claws, bits of skin, small gourds containing various mixtures, and anything else the medicine-man might desire for medicinal or magical use. He carried also a rattle made of a bottle-gourd in which seeds or beans were put. The noise of this helped to work upon the feelings of the patient and render him more susceptible to the uncanny influence of the whole performance, and the medicine-man added to the effect by keeping up a kind of growling chant all the time.

When the medicine-man and his assistant arrived at the home of a patient they took their rattles and bags and danced round the outside of the house; then, entering it, they went through a performance of sweeping evil from the walls with brooms of the herbs *murwingula*, *muzimbazimba* and *mulokola*. Having collected all the evil from the walls, they rubbed down the patient with herb-leaves and put the herbs outside the door.

The patient was then placed on a cow-skin or bark-cloths spread on the floor, where the men could easily get at him and move round him. The chief medicine-man took up a position at his head while the assistant sat at his feet, and they chanted an incantation, accompanying it with the noise of their rattles. The assistant used his rattle during the whole performance, and both kept up a growling chant which was supposed to terrify the ghost.

The chief medicine-man then chose from his bag various drugs and implements which he intended to use and placed them on a skin beside him. He ground to powder some of the herbs, and, making two or three scratches on the patient's chest, he rubbed the powder into them, making the patient writhe with the smarting pain. The medicine-man then bit off a piece from the ends of some of the roots from his bag, returning each root to the bag when he had used it. He chewed these pieces up and, seizing the patient by the head and jaw, opened his mouth and spat the medicine into it. He also put a little powder into the patient's nose, causing him to sneeze, which was a hopeful sign. The ghost by this time was ready to flee, for the bitter medicine the man had swallowed and the smarting of the incisions made its abode uncomfortable. The medicine-man fanned the patient, uttering incantations over him, and then rubbed him down with his hands, pressing the ghost from his head out at his feet and the tips of his fingers. When the ghost sought to escape it was caught in a pot which was placed ready and was either burned or drowned, while the patient was put back to bed and treated with medicines, according to the symptoms, until he recovered. The fee paid to such medicine-men varied from a cow, a goat or a sheep to a hoe or some butter.

When a child suffered from swelled spleen (*akabango*), the parents took it and put it to sleep by the bedside of the Mugabe through the night. The following morning, when he rose, before he spoke to anyone, he put his foot on the child's stomach and pressed gently, then he spat upon it and it was expected to recover in about four days.

After the cause of an illness, were it god, ghost, or magic, had been dealt with, the patient was treated by the medicine-man according to the symptoms. Cupping or bleeding and blistering were often resorted to, sometimes, for what was considered a minor trouble, by the friends of the patient without the aid of the medicine-man. The blood was taken from the temples or the head, and the instruments used were the end of a cow's horn and a small knife. A few scratches were

made with the knife, the place was moistened with water, and the broad end of the horn held over it, while the air was sucked out through a small hole in the pointed end of the horn, which was then closed with a plug of fibre inserted by the tongue when the air was exhausted. When a certain amount of blood had been drawn off the cup was removed. Blistering was done with a small round iron about four to six inches long and a quarter of an inch in diameter or smaller, which was inserted in a wooden handle. The iron was heated until hot enough to raise a blister and was then applied to the skin quickly in several places. Sometimes two or three irons would be fastened together to make more blisters. Blistering was practised for headache and cold in the head, when the blisters were made on the head; for cold in the chest, when they were made on the chest; and for rheumatism, when they were made wherever required.

When a man was found to be suffering from small-pox, he was isolated and someone who had had the disease was chosen to look after him. For the first three days he was given little to eat and lived on milk and hot water. He was encouraged to sleep as much as possible. On the fourth day the pustules were pricked with a thorn and as a rule the pus was left to dry on them, care being taken that it did not get into the eyes, but some people mopped it up with a sponge made of some herb or of plantain-fibre. On the sixth day, the patient was bathed with warm fresh water, and on the seventh he was smeared with white clay, which absorbed the pus and cleaned off the peeling skin. This was continued until he was well and he was also encouraged to take as much nourishment as he could.

In cases of venereal disease (*enjoka*), roots of the herb *kagendazada* were pounded and the juice put in the sun for twelve hours and then drunk, which caused the blood and pus to come away. A man in feeble health who was childless was given juice obtained by pounding the roots of *saru* and *gugu*, and also of *mziramfu*, mixed with milk. These were said to strengthen him so that he soon became a father.

Peasants suffered from bubonic plague, but it was almost entirely confined to them. When one or more of the inmates of a house died, special medicine-men went and either cleansed the hut or destroyed it entirely, as they considered best for the purification of the locality. Should a cow-man contract the disease, he was smeared over from head to foot with cow-dung and recovered.

A herb, *omusongyesongye*, was given to women when attacked by a kind of fit which made them fall down and struggle. The juice of the herb was extracted and poured into the patient's nose.

Sometimes, when a man suffered from a cough due to a cold or some chest complaint, a cow or bull was brought and a vein in its neck opened. The patient put his mouth to the place and drank the blood as it gushed out. When a man suffered from pain in his back, blood was drawn from a cow, mixed with milk, and given to him to drink.

## CHAPTER XIII

### DEATH AND INHERITANCE

Disposal of property before death—preparing a dead body—the grave—milk for the dead—the burial—the mourning—purifying the mourners—coming of the heir—purificatory ceremony—end of the mourning—the widows—the ghost—death of women—death ceremonies among agricultural people—burial—purification—widows—inheritance—right of the eldest son of the first wife—appointing an heir—division of property—levirate custom—inheritance by children—heir of a dead woman—right of a slave's son—inheritance among peasants

#### DEATH

WHEN a man was seriously ill and was not expected to recover, he was pressed to announce the name of the son whom he chose as his heir, for it was not necessarily the eldest son who inherited, though he usually did so, and a man might name as his heir anyone he chose. Even then it was possible for the clan-members to override his wishes and appoint someone else to inherit, and, if he did not make his desires known, the Mugabe might claim the property and take possession of it, handing it over to whomsoever he would. The relatives, therefore, were much disturbed if the sick man refused to speak, and they sent for some responsible member of the clan who would do what he could to induce the sick man to declare his wishes. Should he still persist in his silence, they feared that someone among them had done something wrong for which the sick man intended to punish him, and this was considered to be so serious that relatives whose consciences reproached them have been known to die of fright. Should he, however, wish to dispose of his property himself, he would state the number of cattle which each child was to receive and give instructions as to the treatment of his widows. The relatives also asked him whether there was anyone against whom he had a grudge, and, if he named

anyone, that person was told and would bring a cow or some other gift to make his peace before the dying man became a dangerous ghost.

When a chief fell ill and his recovery was despaired of, an old cow was selected to supply him with milk until his death. When the man died, his relatives gathered from all parts and the widows, with some of the relatives or some chosen men, prepared the body. It was washed, the legs bent up into the squatting posture adopted by cow-men when resting, the eyes were closed, the right arm was placed under the head and the left arm on the chest. In some cases weeping and wailing went on all this time, but usually there was silence during the preparation of the body for the grave. All the members of the clan were expected to be present at the washing of the body as a leave-taking.

Meanwhile some male relatives or some of the dead man's slaves dug the grave in the dung-heap in the kraal, except when dung was scarce and the dung-heap not big enough, it was not dug below the surface of the earth. Burial in the earth was considered to be objectionable and was always avoided, unless it was forced upon them by dire necessity. The grave was lined with grass and a mat put in for the body to lie upon, and all had to be ready by afternoon when the cows returned from pasture. In exceptional cases, should a chief die during the night, he might be buried in the early morning before the cows left the kraal, but, should he die during the day, his body had to wait for burial until the cows returned in the evening. This was the procedure adopted whenever possible.

When the cows came home, the old cow which had been chosen to give milk to the dead man during his illness was milked and the milk poured into the mouth of the dead man, whose face was then covered over. This cow was not milked again but was kept until the day when the heir came to take possession, when it was killed and the meat divided among the mourners. In the case of a wealthy man a sprig of *esoghi*, some of the herb *nyawera*, some wool from a white sheep, and

the milk of a white cow were brought and put on his stomach to persuade the ghost to remain quiet.

The body was laid in the grave on its right side looking up the hill towards the gate of the kraal, never down the hill, and, when the grave was filled, a cow was killed and eaten beside it, and the mourning began and went on until the heir came. During the interment silence was observed by all; no sound of sorrow might be heard. All the full-grown bulls of the dead man's herd had strings tied round their scrotums to prevent them from mating with the cows, and they were killed as required during the period of mourning. None of them was killed until all the members of the family were assembled, which was usually by the second day after the death. When the grave was filled in the mourners washed their hands, shaved their heads, cut their nails, and gave themselves up to weeping and wailing for the period of mourning, during which they ate meat but might not drink milk until after their purification when mourning ceased. Any relatives who had urgent duties which prevented them from taking part in the mourning left for their homes after the funeral.

Among poorer pastoral people two bulls were brought immediately after the funeral. These were killed and the blood sprinkled over the house and goods of the dead man and over the people. The mourners washed and shaved their heads, feasted on the meat and drank beer all that night, leaving the milk for the children. Next morning the man chosen to inherit was brought and the mourning ended. Four days was, however, the usual time among the more wealthy people, and, if all things were not ready by that time, the mourning might go on longer, ending always after an even number of days. The heir would endeavour to have everything ready by the fourth day, for, the longer the mourning went on, the more meat was eaten and the more beer drunk. Delays might be caused by the absence of some important relative or by the fact that some of the herds were at a distance from the kraal. It was not necessary that all the cattle should be present,

but some hair from each animal in the herd had to be brought before the purificatory ceremony could be performed.

During the time of mourning, the mourners slept on the ground near the fire and not on beds, the kraal was not swept out and the main fire was put out and not re-lighted. Even the calves had no fresh grass put in their huts. Any cattle which the heir did not want were used for food, sold, or given away.

On the night before the heir was to come, the mourners had their heads shaved again and a bunch of the herb *mwetengo* was rubbed over them to remove any evil resulting from the death. The herb was then cast out on waste land where no one was likely to pass and be contaminated by it. This was called *kuliasirwa* or purification.

Early on the next morning, the heir came, bringing with him a sister to perform the purificatory ceremony. This sister might be married or single, and if the heir had no sister, the clan-members appointed for the purpose a woman of the clan, who was his "potential sister," that is, a woman of the same clan and generation, who could take the place of his sister as a "potential mother" might take the place of his mother, should she be dead. The mother of the heir had also to be present, and, if she was dead, a "potential mother" was appointed to take her place.

The heir and his sister, both wearing new clothes, took places outside the gate of the kraal, and the people and cattle were gathered round them. All the pots and other goods of the dead man were brought from the house and anything that was not in perfect condition was broken and placed upon the grave, while the good pots and other possessions were brought out to be purified. A little of every kind of food which a cow-man might eat was also brought to be cleansed.

When all was ready, a healthy boy whose parents were alive and well was sent to bring a pot of water from a well. This was mixed with white clay and a bunch of the herbs *nyawera* and *mugosola* was prepared. The sister of the heir took the bunch of herbs, dipped them into the water, and touched her



brother on his forehead and knees; she then sprinkled the people, the vessels, the food, and, lastly, the cattle. As she finished, she dropped her bunch of herbs before any cow or cows which she desired, and these became her own and were separated from the rest of the herd. To prevent her from taking the best of the cows, the herdsmen usually brought these up close to the heir and kept them there during the ceremony; these were called "the herd of the shoes," and she might not take any of them. Should this sister not be married, the cows were left as hers in the charge of her brother, for no ordinary woman might possess property. Should she be married but have no son, she also left them with her brother, for, if she took them away, they became her husband's and might be inherited by a stranger if she remained without children. If she had a son, however, she took them away, for they would be inherited by him.

Another account of this purificatory ceremony stated that the heir sat upon his stool and the sister took a seat beside him, while any children of the family were gathered near them. The headman of the clan dipped a bunch of *nyawera* and *mugosola* into the mixture of white clay and water and touched the foreheads and knees of the heir, his sister and the children. The sister then rose and proceeded to purify the people, the goods and the cattle. The bunch of herbs was thrown away, and, if any one came upon it in the path or in the grass, they would walk round it and not step over it, lest the evil of death should come upon them. This purificatory ceremony (*kuliasivira*) marked the end of the mourning.

The heir put on the dead man's shoes and sat on his stool, and the cows were all milked. The headman of the clan milked a new pot full to the brim and presented it to the heir, who drank as much as he could at one draught. His sister then drank some and the children finished it. In the case of important chiefs this part of the ceremony was repeated on the following day.

The first duty of the heir, when the purificatory ceremonies had been completed, was to see that the fire in the kraal was

re-lit and everything cleaned up and put straight. Then feasting began, bulls were killed for meat and the people drank beer and made merry.

As soon as the heir had time to build a new kraal, the old one was either broken down and the house destroyed, or they were left to fall down. The heir was given a new stool and shoes and took up his abode in the new kraal. He was responsible for any debts incurred by the dead man, but there was no set time for presenting claims, which, if they could be substantiated, had to be paid at any future time.

The widows of a dead man, especially if they were too old to marry again, would commit suicide by poisoning or by hanging themselves. Wives, as they grew old, often carried poison about with them so that it was ready for use, but no one as a rule attempted to prevent their taking it, as this was looked upon as a laudable action. Younger widows, however, might be taken to wife by the heir, or they might return to their own homes without repayment of the marriage-fee. Such a widow might marry again, in which case the man paid no marriage-fee for her unless she bore him a son, when the marriage-fee had to be paid before the boy was considered to be a legitimate child or could inherit.

When the heir had left the old kraal, the grave was no longer cared for and no attention was paid to the bones of the dead, though that part of the country which contained the dead was taboo to the family. The ghost accompanied the family, for a special place was dedicated to it in the new house and offerings were made to it there. Cows were dedicated to the ghost and the milk was placed in a special wooden pot and put in the place sacred to the ghost near the owner's bed. A shrine was also built for the ghost near the kraal-gate, where offerings were made when the medicine-man announced that such were necessary. The medicine-man often declared that the ghosts of other relatives required offerings, and then shrines had to be built for them also, for no ghost would share a shrine with another. Thus even forty shrines might be found at times before the entrance of one kraal.

When a woman fell ill, she was nursed by her mother or her sister who came to her for the purpose. When she died, she was washed and her legs were bent up as in the case of a man, but it was her left arm that was placed under her head. Her grave was dug in the dung-heap and she lay on her left side as if facing her husband's body. Her husband did not at once leave the kraal though he did not enter the house again, and before long he would arrange to have a new kraal built and leave the old one to fall down.

When a woman died while with child, the child was removed and buried in a separate grave. No blame was laid on the husband, and he might marry again.

If a mother died after the birth of a child, her sister or a clan-sister might come as her heir, marry the man, and look after the children. A motherless infant might either be fed on cow's milk or brought up by a foster-mother.

#### DEATH CEREMONIES AMONG THE AGRICULTURAL PEOPLE

The body of a dead man was prepared for burial in the same way as among the cow-people, but the body was not washed and the burial could take place at any time. The grave was dug in the earth near the house, and the man was laid in it on his right side. The widow had to go to sleep in some other house, for the door-posts were taken down and laid on the bed and the centre ring of the roof and the main central post of the house were taken down and laid on the grave. The bow of the dead man was broken and laid on the grave with the wooden shaft of his spear, the handle of his hoe, and his shield, and his widow added a bangle from her arm. A male goat took the place of the bull of the pastoral ceremony; its scrotum was tied and it was kept until the heir came, when it was killed and eaten.

Four days were given to mourning, and during this time the children of the family might eat no salt, nor might they eat with children whose parents were alive.

After four days the heir came and three baskets filled with food were placed before him. His sister then proceeded to

purify the heir, the family, the pots and other goods, and the animals, with water mixed with white clay. When she had finished, she laid her bunch of herbs at the feet of a goat which became her property.

Any childless widow who did not wish to become wife to the heir might return to her family, who had then to refund the marriage-fee which had been paid for her. If a widow had children, she continued to live with them and care for them while the heir took the place of their father.

#### INHERITANCE

It was usual, though not an invariable rule, for the eldest son of a man's first wife to succeed to his office and property. A man could, however, if he so desired, nominate any other son to be his heir, and it was also possible for the clan-members to appoint someone whom they considered more suitable and to reject the heir nominated by the deceased owner of the property. It sometimes happened that the first wife had only daughters, and the man married a second wife and had a son by her who became heir to his property. If, however, the first wife later bore a son, this child would take precedence and inherit, though he was younger than the son of the second wife. In like manner, if a man married his slave as his first wife and she gave birth to a son, he would inherit even though the father later married a free-woman and by her had a son. When the members of the clan refused to allow the eldest son to inherit, it would be because of some mental or physical disability or because of some known evil habit.

If a man died without an heir, the head of the clan might appoint a clan-brother to take possession of the property. To show that he had thus inherited property otherwise than from his own father, he was thereafter known as the "little father" of himself. It was a rule never to mention the name of a dead man, and a child who inherited property from his father was called "the father of himself"; thus, if *N* died leaving a son *L* who inherited, *L* was never called the son of *N* but "the father of *L*," which made it clear to everyone

that he possessed property inherited from a dead father. In cases where there was no heir, the Mugabe might take possession of the property and give it to whom he would.

A man usually left instructions for some of his property to be divided among the other members of his family in addition to his heir, who would take charge of younger members. Some might even be left to widows who had small sons, but, as women were not supposed to possess property, it would become the property of the children as soon as they were old enough to manage it. A childless widow became the wife of the heir or of some relative of the dead man, and therefore any property she received remained in the clan, becoming the property of her new husband, who was a man of the same clan as the former owner.

Younger children of the family often remained with the heir, though the grandparents were then rightful guardians. The cattle which younger children inherited remained with the heir until the children were of an age to take charge of them.

Should a man die childless, his brother was, in some cases, expected to take the widow to wife, and the first son she bore was looked upon as the son of the dead man and inherited his property. This, however, required the special sanction of the Mugabe, and as a rule an heir of the same clan was appointed who took the childless widow to wife, and her children shared the property with any other children he might have.

Young children sometimes inherited property and performed the purificatory rites with a real or clan sister. In such a case the mother looked after the property until the child was old enough to do so. If a man died leaving his wife with child, the family waited until the birth before deciding on the disposal of the property, for, if the child was a boy, he would inherit and the mother would manage affairs until he grew up; if, however, the child was a girl, the heir was appointed by the clan and the widow became his wife.

As a woman did not possess property, she had no heir,

but, if a wife died leaving children, her sister might come and take charge of them. She was then known as the heir of the dead woman, and generally married the husband.

A man might marry a slave-woman, and any son she bore to him might inherit his property. When a male slave was given a wife by his master, any children born to them were slaves.

Among the agricultural people, the heir took about ten out of every thirty animals, all the implements, the house, which he repaired and used, and any personal property. The chief wife took five goats, and the rest were divided amongst the family. A peasant usually had four or five wives and these went to the heir

## CHAPTER XIV

### WARFARE AND HUNTING

Cattle the only cause of war—raids by the Baganda—raids on the Baganda—preparing to meet invasion—the safety of the Mugabe—preparing an expedition—auguries—work of spies—magic-working—the leader—assembling the army—commissariat—entering the enemy's country—methods of fighting—the women—treatment of the dead and prisoners—home-coming—the wounded—hunting among pastoral people—the Mugabe at a hunt—hunting among peasants—dividing the kill

#### WARFARE

THE Banyankole were not a warlike people and suffered much from attacks of neighbours who knew their peaceful disposition. Their principal enemies were the Baganda, though other dwellers on their borders, such as the Bakitara, would also seize any opportunity to raid their country and carry off cattle. When cattle were thus stolen from them, the Banyankole would rise and make an attempt to get them back and now and then, tempted by the sight of ill-protected herds near their own borders, they would rise of their own accord and raid a neighbouring country, carrying off the cattle, but nothing unconnected with cattle was able to rouse them to war. The cow-men scorned and despised all who cultivated the land or lived on a vegetable diet, but they would do and bear anything for the sake of their cows, to which they became very much attached.

As their principal aggressors were the Baganda, cattle grazing on that side of Ankole had to be very carefully guarded, but it often happened that Baganda raiders would succeed in carrying off herds to their own country. The difficulty then was to raise a body of men quickly enough to get the cows back before they were driven too far into Buganda. The Banyankole had the advantage of knowing the cows, who would obey their voices, and of being able to move about by night,

for they had little fear of wild animals. They would therefore gather as many men as they could get and follow the raiders by night, for they knew that they were no match for the warlike Baganda in open warfare. In the dark they would make a sudden rush upon the raiders and some of them would gather together and drive off the cows while others attacked the men and kept them from following up the cows. By this means they were frequently able to recover the greater part of their lost cattle without much loss of life.

A pastoral chief on the borders of Buganda might make a sudden raid into Baganda territory to carry off, at the risk of his life, some of their herds. These he would hurry into the heart of his own country before their guardians had time to raise the alarm and get help. After such a successful raid, the chief would carry his tale to the Mugabe, taking to him some of the spoil and making scornful remarks about the other chiefs, who would be roused, by jealousy of the rewards and praise given to him, to emulate his feat.

While the chief was receiving honour and commendation, however, arrangements had to be made to meet an almost certain invasion of the Baganda. The Mugabe consulted diviners and medicine-men, who, by their charms, discovered where the Baganda army was and whether they were coming to attack. Further information was got by sending spies into Buganda to find out what they could about the doings of the people. When these scouts or the people on the borders found that an army was on its way into the country, the news was sent by a runner to the Mugabe. He called out as he went, to warn the people on the way, and, as soon as he reached the Mugabe, messengers were sent out to carry the news all through the country.

Meanwhile steps were being taken for the safety of the Mugabe and of the cattle. The herds, especially those of the Mugabe, were driven into the far parts of the country, while a new kraal was built and the Mugabe's women and his property were taken to it. The Mugabe himself remained in the old kraal until the enemy came near, when he also retired



to the new place. If the enemy came on so rapidly that there was not time for the Mugabe to flee, he remained where he was and took part in the fight, but as a rule he was kept in a place of safety. When he left the old kraal, a guard was put in charge. This man had to watch until he was sure that there was no hope of turning the enemy back, when he had to set fire to the royal kraal. The Mugabe might never return to a kraal in which the enemy had been, for it would be bewitched, and the fact of their entering a kraal in which he had resided might also do him harm, so that all such danger was averted by burning the kraal. These invasions never lasted longer than a day or two and the greatest difficulty was to prevent the enemy from capturing and carrying off women and cattle.

Sometimes a chief would inform the Mugabe that there were many cattle in a certain district which was easily accessible, that they were inadequately guarded, and that an attack in force would easily capture them. When an expedition on a large scale was planned, it took some time, often about a year, to make all the preparations.

The Mugabe first consulted diviners and medicine-men to find out whether the expedition was advisable and whether it would be successful. About fifty cows and two hundred fowls were collected and brought for the purpose of taking auguries. A cow was milked and the Mugabe squirted a little of the milk into the mouths of twenty cows, whispering into the ear of each what he wanted. These cows were separated from the fifty and kept apart, and next morning early one of them was killed by having the arteries in its throat opened. This was done by cutting down them, not across in the ordinary way, and the medicine-man watched to see how the blood flowed. The lungs and intestines were then examined, special attention being paid to the way in which the dung was cleared from the stomach. If there was any stoppage it meant that the Mugabe would meet with evil. The skin had to be flayed carefully from the animal, and the meat was cut so that no bones were broken, and eaten on the spot.

The fowls were treated in the same way. The Mugabe spat into the throat of one at night and the next morning it was killed and the flow of blood, the lungs and intestines examined. When the augury from a fowl was good, its head was taken and made into a fetish for the Mugabe to wear.

Sometimes the Mugabe gave the diviner a white bull from which to take the augury. If the augury was good it was accepted and preparations went forward, but, if it was bad, another was taken before they acted upon it.

While the preparations at home were going on, spies were sent out into the enemy country under the pretence of trading. These men wandered about the country and brought back information as to the strength of the enemy, the size of their herds, their methods of herding, and the protection of the animals by night. Some of the spies carried with them magic which would prevent the people from knowing that any expedition was being planned and from making any preparations. These men travelled into the country as if on their way to buy goods. They visited the people and often stayed some time in different kraals, where they gathered things with which to make magic, and deposited the magic objects they had with them. They carried as a rule nothing but a bag for tobacco and a pipe, but under the tobacco in the bag were concealed all sorts of objects, things they had picked up in the kraals, on the roads, or in the grass, and also medicines prepared and brought from their own country. They buried things in the roads and stuck them in the roofs of houses, and by such means the people were enfeebled, the cows were bewitched so that they came away quickly, and all things were made easy for the attackers. Sometimes these men took a bull on which they used magic. In the evening they turned it loose among some cows and it accompanied them back to their kraal and bewitched them, making them desire to wander. They believed that the magic made the bull able to wander invisible during the day so that it reached fresh kraals each evening and bewitched many cows.

At home the Mugabe, in consultation with the diviner,

appointed a leader for the army. He was given a special royal fetish, *Luwoma*, and a drum and fifes, and while the final preparations were being made he lived at home with his wife. Meanwhile a special kraal was built for the Mugabe near the frontier from which the raid was to be made. Here he took up his abode with a special woman to look after him and cows to feed him. Here also came the royal medicine-man with his fetishes and the royal spear. Messengers came from the army daily with news and the medicine-man took auguries and sent messengers to the leader with blessing and advice.

When the time came to gather his army together, the leader camped at the place from which he meant to start the expedition, and the various chiefs with their followers came to him there. The Mugabe sent messengers round the country to call the people by a special cry, for no drums were used. Herdsmen and serfs both answered the call and came to join the army without any auguries or blessing from the medicine-men. No women, however, went to war, those of the cow-men being too fat to travel and the serfs being forbidden to bring theirs.

The leader had his hut in the centre of the camping-place and others camped round about, leaving a clear space round the hut where his special fetish was placed; no person might pass in front of his hut but had to go round behind it.

The Mugabe usually gave a number of cows for the food of the army and these were killed and the meat dried to carry with them. The leader and chiefs carried beer, honey and millet, as well as dried meat, but the rest of the army expected to be supplied by the people as they passed along. For arms the men carried one or two leaf-shaped spears, a small shield with a boss, and a bow with arrows in a wooden quiver.

When the army was ready to start, a fetish of herbs was placed in the road so that they might step over it as they passed. This was said to give the men courage and to make their arms strong and sure so that they might kill men and secure many cattle. The Mugabe wore a fetish and carried a fetish

stick to which a number of roots and herbs of special powers were tied.

While the army was away, the Mugabe and the royal medicine-man remained in the new kiaal and messengers went constantly between them and the army bringing information as to the doings of the forces. The royal medicine-man took auguries daily to keep the Mugabe informed of the progress of the expedition, and he sent his blessing by messengers to the leader.

When the army reached the enemy's country, it was divided into small parties so that it would not attract attention, and the men travelled by night, resting during the day. When they came to the pre-arranged place, a few chosen warriors went forward by night to attack and carry off the cattle. When they had succeeded in getting the cows away, the rest of the army rose and attacked those who tried to follow up the stolen cattle. These were driven by day and night until they crossed the border and reached a place of safety.

If the retreating invaders found that the enemy's forces were coming very near them, they killed a cow and left it half cooked near fires, to look as though they had been disturbed in the midst of a meal. The warriors would certainly stop to eat the meat thus provided and this gave the others more time to make good their escape with the cattle.

When possible they avoided an actual fight, but if they were forced into it, they attacked in large numbers, shooting arrows and casting stones from slings. When the fight came to close quarters, they attacked with their spears, which were never thrown but reserved for hand-to-hand fighting. Whenever possible archers would conceal themselves in the grass or bush and attack unseen while the spear-men would seek to cut off and attack isolated members or small groups of the enemy. Strategy was more admired than bravery in the field and a leader was more praised for avoiding a pitched battle than for any show of bravery.

While the expedition was going on, the women who had husbands or sons in the army went out to a *kirikuti* tree with

their milk-pots. These were placed before the tree and they called upon the god to keep their relatives safe and prosper the expedition, smearing the tree, as they prayed, with butter. The tree was watched and if any insect climbed the trunk they thought that a battle was going on and redoubled their intercessions and prayers for victory. In the afternoon they drank the milk as a solemn meal in the presence of the god. Women whose husbands were out with the army had to keep all men away from their beds and be strictly chaste.

When the news came that the men were returning, bead head-dresses were put upon the milk-pots, and thanks and praise were offered to the god, who had brought them back in safety and given them success. In addition to as much milk as could be kept, beer and the best of food were prepared for their arrival, when they feasted on the meat and beer and later drank milk.

The bodies of warriors who were killed in the field or died of wounds were put out of the camp and covered with grass, leaves and branches to keep wild animals from carrying them off. The dead of the enemy were never mutilated and prisoners were brought to the Mugabe and kept as slaves, one or at times both their ears being cut off to show that they were slaves taken in war.

When the army came near home, messengers were sent to the Mugabe who sent cattle to be given to them and a medicine-man to purify the warriors and the spoil, after which the greater part of the army departed and went straight to their own homes. The leader with the chiefs and his special followers went to the Mugabe to report the doings of the expedition and to divide the spoil. The Mugabe sent his herdsman to pick out cows for the royal herds, after which the leader might choose what he wanted, and presents were given to any chiefs or men who had specially distinguished themselves. Any which then remained were divided among the other chiefs and the army. The Mugabe might also grant special cattle or even chieftainships to men who had shown great bravery, but any who were accused of cowardice were not

punished, though they knew that they might never hope for promotion

The warrior who had killed a man was treated like a murderer or a hunter who had killed a lion, leopard, antelope, or hyacna (because these animals belonged to the gods); he was not allowed to sleep or eat with others until he had been purified, for the ghost of the man was upon him.

The wounded were carried home with the army and if a man's wounds were not serious, he was looked after by his wife in his own kraal and the wife had to be strictly chaste until he recovered. A sick man might be fed on milk warmed by adding hot water, though milk might never be boiled. More seriously wounded men were also brought home, but they were looked after by surgeons and nursed by some old woman who was a widow or by a woman who had had no sexual connexion with men for some time.

The surgeon took leaves of *ekitobotobo* or *ntengo* and laid them on stones heated in the kraal fire. When the sap flowed from the hot leaves they were applied to the wound until it appeared clean and healthy. If a wound was very unhealthy, the surgeon heated a spear and thrust it inside to burn away the bad place and stop bleeding. To stop excessive bleeding in a limb, a pad of fibre was placed over the wound and a bandage bound tightly round. A barbed arrow or spear which was left in a wounded limb was forced through and no attempt made to draw it back. A special surgeon (*abagyengi*) was called in to treat bone fractures. In the case of a broken limb he applied some herbs, bound the limb to splints, and kept it thus until the fracture had healed. In the case of a skull fracture, the surgeon removed any splinters of bone, bound herbs over the wound and left it to heal. From time to time he put on fresh herbs, using kinds which he had found by experience to have healing properties, though he knew nothing of their antiseptic action.

When the wounds had healed, the old woman took the man to some waste land near, where she washed him from head to foot with fresh water and purified him with the

herbs *mwetengo* and *omubuza* and then with *nyawera*. She then put new clothes upon him, taking the old as her perquisite. After this purification the man returned to his wife and family.

### HUNTING

Among the cow-men hunting was only a form of sport and was not followed for the sake of food, for it was not permitted to eat the meat of the animals killed, though their skins were used for rugs and sometimes for clothing. Some people declared that the cow-men might eat certain kinds of antelope, but if the animal saw the hunter approaching before it was killed, he might not partake of the meat. The only professional hunters kept by the Mugabe were a few elephant hunters of the peasant class. As, however, the people did not value ivory for its own sake and never worked it, it was only used for sale to adjacent tribes, and the hunters were few.

The Mugabe had large numbers of dogs for hunting and these were kept for him by his peasants, though he kept a favoured few in his own kraal. These were distinguished by wearing special collars, made from the skins of animals, to which bells were attached. The dogs were used in the hunts to drive the game.

When the Mugabe desired to go to hunt, messengers were sent round the night before to warn the people, hundreds of whom went out as beaters with the dogs. The Mugabe set out in the morning about nine or ten o'clock and took up a good position with a number of assistants. The beaters drove the game past him and he might shoot them with arrows or throw spears at them, or even spear them down if they passed near him. The guards who were with him quickly brought down any animal which he had wounded and he himself at times became excited and ran after a wounded animal. The present Mugabe has become too fat to think of hunting and even moving about is difficult to him, but the rulers of old were active and took part in such sport.

The meat of the animals killed was given to the peasants who accompanied the hunt and to the dogs, and the skins went to the royal skin-dressers to be prepared for use.

Hunting was, however, a different thing among the peasants, for it was their chief means of securing meat. They kept dogs which were used for putting up small game and these sometimes also caught gazelle or other animals, being rewarded with the entrails.

A peasant might hunt alone or with one or two companions but sometimes a man, generally one of the medicine-men, would prepare a bigger hunt. In this case he blew his horn at night and the next morning early those who cared to hunt assembled at his hut. The leader placed a fetish in the path and all jumped over it, thus removing any evil that might be hanging over them and giving them strength and skill for the chase. Nets were often used in these organised hunts and the animals driven into them.

If the leader of the hunt killed an animal, he took a shoulder, the back, the legs and the skin, while the second man took a shoulder. If the man who called the hunt had not killed the animal, he took a shoulder by virtue of his office, and the man who had killed the animal divided up the rest of the meat as he wished. They never ate the flesh of pigs, but used the skin and gave the flesh to the dogs.

When a man was out hunting, his wife refrained from sexual intercourse with other men and she had to be careful not to kill anything; even vermin, if caught, must be thrown away and not killed. She might let no man pass behind her back but warned him to keep in front of her. Should she neglect any of these precautions, her husband's chances of obtaining game in the hunt would be ruined.



## CHAPTER XV

### FOLK-LORE

#### The Hawk and the Hen—the Rabbit and the Leopard

##### THE HAWK AND THE HEN

A HEN went to some cow-men to buy meat. She brought it away with her and immediately met a hawk also going to get food. When she saw him coming she tucked her leg under her wing. The hawk asked her, "Where did you get your meat?" The hen replied, "From the cow-men." The hawk asked, "What did you pay for it?" and she answered, "I bought it with my leg; those who go to buy take legs." So the hawk cut off its leg and then could not walk, and in anger declared that hawks would always hunt hens and chickens and kill them. Since then when a hen sees a hawk coming she always hides her leg under her wing.

##### THE RABBIT AND THE LEOPARD

A rabbit and a leopard lived together and the leopard borrowed a cow from the rabbit. Afterwards the rabbit wanted the cow. The leopard wished the rabbit to die, so that he might keep the cow, so he said, "To-morrow bring nine portions of cooked millet. We will cross the lake and when I throw one portion in you will also throw in a portion to pacify the lake spirit." The leopard took nine stones and nine portions of food. They reached the lake and as they began to cross the leopard dropped in a stone. The rabbit threw in a portion of food and they went on until the nine portions were finished. The leopard when he landed took out a portion of millet and ate it. The rabbit asked, "Where did you get that from?" and the leopard replied, "Is there nothing at the bottom of an old man's bag?" They went on and the leopard said, "If you get any wine, come back here to get

a reed for a tube to drink it through." The little rabbit said, "I must go and relieve myself," and went back, picking a reed, which he carried. They went on a little and the leopard saw a tree and said, "If they give you anything to eat, come and break a piece of wood to help you eat it." The rabbit broke a piece off and carried it. When they reached their destination, the people gave them some wine and the leopard said to the rabbit, "Go and fetch a reed from where I showed you." The rabbit went just outside and came back with the reed. The leopard refused the wine in anger because he had been so quick, for he had meant to drink all the wine while the rabbit was away. The people brought food, and the leopard told the rabbit to go and bring a stick to serve out the food. He went again just outside and returned with the stick. The leopard refused the food as he did the wine, and then he was hungry and went at night and killed a goat. He returned and found the rabbit asleep and rubbed blood on his mouth, knowing that the owners of the goat would come next day and question them as to the goat. When they came, as he expected, he said, "I did not steal it, but see on whom the blood is to be found; catch him and kill him." They came to the rabbit, who was asleep and did not know what was happening, found the blood, and killed him. The leopard then went away satisfied.

Some time afterwards, the younger brother of the rabbit learned all that had happened and he wanted to have revenge on the leopard for killing his brother. He went to the witch-doctor to get advice. The witch-doctor said to him, "Take shells and when you reach the place where you will stay the night, put them on your eyes; and take nine portions of cooked millet and nine stones. When you cross the lake with the leopard and he says, 'Throw in food,' throw in a stone." The young rabbit went and made friends with the leopard and suggested a visit to the island. They crossed the lake and the rabbit threw in a stone whenever the leopard suggested millet should be dropped in to appease the water spirit. On the road the leopard broke off a reed and the rabbit did so

also. The leopard was very troubled and told the rabbit, "If they give us wine come here to fetch a reed to make a drinking tube"; and again when they reached the tree, he said, "Come here if food is given to us and get a stick to make a spoon"; but the leopard was unable to trick the rabbit. As before, the leopard was angry and ate no food, but when they went to bed, the rabbit fixed the shells into his eyes to make them look as though he were awake. The leopard slipped away and killed a goat and came to rub the blood on the rabbit, but seeing the white shells he thought he was awake and stole away to wait until he should go to sleep. In the morning the owners of the goat came to enquire for it, and the rabbit said, "You see us. I did not do it. Kill the thief." They found the leopard with blood on him and killed him, and thus the first rabbit was avenged.

## RELATIONSHIPS

*Son, omwana wangye (used by the father).*

*Father, tata (used by a son)*

*Mother, mawe.*

*Elder brother, mukulu wangye (m.s.).*

*Elder sister, mukulu wangye (w.s.).*

*Sister, munyanyaze (m.s.).*

*Father's brother, tata nto.*

*Father's brother's wife, muka tata nto*

*Father's brother's child, murumuna wange (if younger than speaker), mukulu wange*

*Father's sister, tata nkazi.*

*Father's sister's husband, iba tata nkazi.*

*Father's sister's child, mwojo wa tata nkazi.*

*Mother's brother, marimi.*

*Mother's brother's wife, muka marimi*

*Mother's brother's child, mwana wa marimi.*

*Mother's sister, mawe nto.*

*Mother's sister's husband, iba mawe nto.*

*Mother's sister's child, mwojo wa mawe nto.*

*Sister's son's wife, mukamwana wangye (m.s.).*

*Sister's son's child, mwana wangye (m.s.).*

*Sister's daughter's husband, mulamu wangye (m.s.).*

*Sister's daughter's child, mwana wangye (m.s.).*

*Father's father, tata nkulu*

*Father's mother, mawe nkulu.*

*Mother's father, tata nkulu.*

*Mother's mother, mawe nkulu.*

*Younger brother, muganda nto.*

*Wife, muka.*

*Daughter, muhala.*

*Son's son, mwana wa mwana wange.*

*Son's daughter, mwana (muhala) wa muhala wange.*

*Daughter's son, mwana (muhala) wa muhala wange.*

*Daughter's daughter, mwana (muhala) wa muhala wange.*

*Husband, ibanyi*

*Wife's father, tatazara.*

*Wife's mother, mazara.*

*Husband's father, tatazara.*

*Husband's mother, mazara.*

*Wife's brother, mulamu wangye.*

*Wife's sister, mulamu wangye.*

*Husband's brother, mulamu wangye.*

*Husband's sister, mulamukazi wangye*

*Wife's sister's husband, mushawzire wangye.*

*Husband's brother's wife, muka ibanyi.*

*Son's wife's parents, baishazara mwana wangye.*



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